COTTONWOOD WATER DISTRICT

3282 Chestnut Street • Cottonwood, CA 96022

Phone: (530) 347-3472 • www.cottonwoodwaterdistrict.org

POLICY ON DISCONTINUATION OF WATER SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT

(Water Shutoff Protection Act – Health & Safety Code §§ 116902 et seq., as amended by SB 3)

Adopted by the Board of Directors: August 12, 2026

Effective Date: August 12, 2026

1. Purpose and Applicability

This Policy establishes the procedures the Cottonwood Water District ("District") will follow before discontinuing residential water service for nonpayment. It is adopted to comply with the Water Shutoff Protection Act (Health & Safety Code §§ 116902 et seq.), as expanded by Senate Bill 3 (Dodd, 2023). This Policy applies only to the discontinuation of residential water service for nonpayment. It does not apply to terminations for unauthorized use, violation of other District rules, or non-residential accounts.

2. Key Definitions

Residential service: Water service to single-family residences, multifamily residences, mobile homes (including those in mobile home parks), or farmworker housing.

Delinquent: A bill that remains unpaid after the due date stated on the bill.

Covered customer: Any residential customer of the District.

3. When Service May Be Discontinued

The District will not discontinue residential water service for nonpayment until the payment has beer delinquent for at least **60 days**.

Before discontinuing service, the District will provide the customer with a written notice of discontinuation at least **7 business days** before the proposed discontinuation date.

No residential service will be discontinued for nonpayment on a Saturday, Sunday, legal holiday, or at any time when the District's business office is not open to the public.

4. Required Content of the Written Notice of Discontinuation

Every written notice of discontinuation of residential service for nonpayment will include all of the following:

1. The customer's name and address.
2. The amount of the delinquency.
3. The date by which payment or arrangement for payment is required in order to avoid discontinuation of residential service.
4. A description of the process to apply for an extension of time to pay the delinquent charges.
5. A description of the procedure to petition for bill review and appeal.

6. A description of the procedure by which the customer may request a deferred, reduced, amortized, or alternative payment schedule.

4.1 Delivery of Notice

The written notice will be hung on the door of the service address.

If the District is unable to make contact with the customer by telephone and/or email, the District will make a good-faith effort to visit the residence and leave a notice of imminent discontinuation of residential service and a copy of this Policy in a conspicuous place.

The District will also make a reasonable, good-faith effort to contact an adult person residing at the premises by telephone or in person at least 24 hours before discontinuation, when practicable.

5. Alternative Payment Options Available to Any Customer

The District offers the following options to any residential customer facing difficulty paying a water bill:

- **Deferred or reduced payments:** A plan allowing the customer additional time to pay the delinquent amount, or in appropriate cases a reduction of the amount due (the District is not required to reduce the total amount owed).
- **Alternative payment schedules:** Payment arrangements that modify the normal billing cycle or payment due dates.
- **Amortization:** Spreading the unpaid balance over a reasonable period, ordinarily not to exceed 12 months. Longer periods may be approved by the General Manager if a 12-month schedule would cause undue hardship.

Any customer may request one or more of these options by contacting the District office during regular business hours at (530) 347-3472 or in person at 3282 Chestnut Street, Cottonwood, CA 96022. Requests should be made as early as possible and, whenever feasible, before the account becomes 60 days delinquent.

While a customer is complying with an approved alternative payment arrangement, the District will not discontinue service for the amounts covered by that arrangement. If the customer fails to comply with the arrangement for 60 or more days, or fails to pay current charges while on the arrangement for 60 or more days, the District may discontinue service after providing a final notice posted at the premises at least 5 business days before discontinuation.

6. Prohibition on Discontinuation When There Is a Threat to Life, Health, or Safety

The District will not discontinue residential service for nonpayment if all three of the following conditions are met:

1. A primary care provider certifies that discontinuation of residential service will be life-threatening or pose a serious threat to the health and safety of a resident of the premises;
2. The customer demonstrates that the household is financially unable to pay for service within the normal billing cycle. Financial inability is deemed to exist if any member of the household is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment Program (SSI/SSP), or California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), or if the customer declares that the household's annual income is less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level; and
3. The customer is willing to enter into an amortization agreement, alternative payment schedule, or a plan for deferred or reduced payment consistent with this Policy.

When these conditions are met, the District will offer one or more of the alternative payment options described in Section 5. The District will select the option and set reasonable terms. Ordinarily the unpaid balance will be repaid within 12 months; a longer period may be used if a 12-month schedule would cause undue hardship.

7. Formal Mechanism to Contest or Appeal a Bill

A customer who believes a bill is incorrect may contact the District office within five (5) days of receiving the disputed bill. Contact may be made in person at 3282 Chestnut Street, Cottonwood, CA 96022, or by telephone at (530) 347-3472 during regular office hours.

The District will investigate and provide an explanation of the charges, ordinarily within 20 days. If, after receiving the explanation, the customer still believes the bill is incorrect, the customer may, within ten (10) days of the explanation, request a hearing before a review manager of the District. The review manager will make a determination and will also consider whether an amortization or other alternative payment arrangement is appropriate.

Any customer whose request for a hearing results in an adverse determination may appeal to the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days after the review manager's determination.

No residential service will be discontinued for nonpayment while a timely complaint, investigation, or appeal is pending.

8. Telephone Number to Discuss Options

Customers may call **(530) 347-3472** during regular office hours to discuss options for avoiding discontinuation of residential service due to nonpayment, to request this Policy in writing, or to arrange an alternative payment plan.

9. Landlord-Tenant and Master-Meter Situations

When the District furnishes residential service through an individual meter to a residence that is occupied by a tenant, and the account is in the name of the landlord or property owner, the District will make every good-faith effort to inform the actual users of the service that the account is delinquent and subject to termination.

Authorized tenants of individually metered residences have the right to become customers of the District and to be billed for water service without being required to pay any of the delinquent amounts owed by the landlord or prior customer. The tenant must meet the District's ordinary conditions for establishing service (including any required deposit and identification).

When service is furnished through a master meter, the District will make every good-faith effort to inform the actual users if the account becomes delinquent and subject to termination, and will continue service if one or more users are willing and able to assume responsibility for the entire account and meet the District's conditions for service.

10. Reconnection Fees and Interest

For residential customers who demonstrate that household income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, or who have a household member who is a current recipient of CalWORKs, CalFresh, general assistance, Medi-Cal, SSI/SSP, or WIC, the following limits apply:

- Reconnection during normal operating hours: $50 (or the actual cost of reconnection, whichever is less).

- Reconnection during non-operational hours: $150 (or the actual cost of reconnection, whichever is less).

These amounts are subject to annual adjustment for changes in the Consumer Price Index as provided by law. The District's ordinary reconnection fee will not exceed these limits for qualifying low-income customers.

The District will waive interest charges on delinquent bills once every 12 months for qualifying low-income customers.

11. Restoration of Service After Discontinuation

After residential service has been discontinued for nonpayment, service will be restored when the customer pays the delinquent amount (or enters into an approved alternative payment arrangement), pays any applicable reconnection fee consistent with Section 10, and satisfies any other ordinary conditions for service. Information on how to restore service is provided on every notice of discontinuation and is available by calling (530) 347-3472.

12. Languages

Because the District serves 200 or more service connections, this Policy and all related notices of discontinuation will be available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, and any other language spoken by at least 10 percent of the people residing in the District's service area. Upon customer request, the District will provide the Policy in any of the languages listed above.

13. Website Posting and Annual Reporting

This Policy will be posted on the District's website at www.cottonwoodwaterdistrict.org. If the website is unavailable, the Policy will be provided to customers in writing upon request.

The District will annually report the number of discontinuations of residential service for inability to pay to the State Water Resources Control Board and will post that number on its website.

14. Other Provisions

This Policy is intended to comply with all applicable requirements of the Water Shutoff Protection Act. If any provision of this Policy conflicts with a mandatory requirement of state law, the state-law requirement controls.

Questions about this Policy may be directed to the District office at (530) 347-3472 or in person at 3282 Chestnut Street, Cottonwood, CA 96022.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Policy was duly adopted by the Board of Directors of the Cottonwood Water District at a regular meeting held on the 12 day of August, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES: 4

NOES: _____

ABSENT: _____

ABSTAIN: _____

_____
President, Board of Directors

Attest:

_____
Secretary / Board Clerk