

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 12, 2021

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Dallas Water Utilities - Winter Storm System Update**

During Fiscal Year 2020, DWU repaired nearly 1,100 main breaks, averaging about 3 repairs per day. Between February 15 and February 23, we identified 324 main breaks, an average of 36 main breaks per day.

DWU's three-year average water usage for February is 270 million gallons per day. The average water usage for the week of February 15, was 564 million gallons per day. A peak of 686 million gallons occurred on February 18. The last time DWU's consumption was equal to or exceeded this peak was August 7, 2003.

During the course of the Winter 2021 Storm, DWU's Meter Services staff responded to over 3,000 customer requests to cut water off at their meter due to burst pipes so they could begin initiating repairs.

Although, it is too early for a full accounting of costs, in order to maintain 100% regulatory compliance, DWU had approximately 270 employees working around the clock throughout the winter storm and we spent approximately \$1.4 million in contractor support.

In reviewing the math for customers, as an example of the impact of dripping water, if a residential customer dripped 0.5 gallons per minute for 24 hours a day for up to 5 days, that would be 3,600 gallons. Depending on the rate tier of usage, protecting their pipes from bursting during the freeze could result in an additional charge that could range from \$14.58 to \$39.17.

By Charter, Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) is required to charge for water usage. While we are not making adjustments to charges for water use to keep pipes from freezing, we are taking several actions to assist our customers as follows:

- We are excluding the storm period in February from our Winter Months Average calculation. Residential customers are billed for wastewater service based on either their actual water consumption or their Winter Months Average (WMA), whichever is smaller. That calculation is a 30-day average of water use for the months of December through March. So as not to skew their individual WMA upwards, we are excluding the February storm period from the calculation. The WMA goes into effect as of April 1 and is updated annually. This will remove any impacts from February 2021 water use to protect pipes from that calculation for the following twelve months.

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- We are processing leak adjustments for customers who experienced burst pipes or needed repairs related to the storm. Although water use is not forgiven, it is charged at the lowest rate of \$1.88 per 1,000 gallons (residential).
- We are still not charging late fees or processing disconnects to assist our customers from impacts of the pandemic. As always, if a customer is in need, we will work on a payment plan that is affordable.

Please contact me if you have any questions.



Terry Lowery
Director, Dallas Water Utilities

C: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager

Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion
Directors and Assistant Directors