



January 9, 2020

**TO:** LOCSO Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Ron Munds, General Manager  
Jose Acosta, Utility Systems Manager  
**SUBJECT:** **Agenda Item 8A – 1/9/2020 Board Meeting**  
Customer Dispute Regarding High Water Bill at 1539 9th Street

**DESCRIPTION**

**President**  
Marshall E. Ochylski

Customer is contesting a high water bill and requesting a credit to their account for a high water bill received for the September/October billing cycle. The customer is contesting the high water usage and the meter read reflected on the water meter.

**Vice President**  
Charles L. Cesena

**SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the following motion:

**Directors**  
Matthew D. Fourcroy  
Vicki L. Milledge  
Christine M. Womack

***Motion: I move that the Board deny the request for a credit for the customer's high water bill received during September 10, 2019 to November 12, 2019 billing cycle based on the District's policy to only adjust bills associated with water service line leaks.***

**General Manager**  
Ron Munds

**DISCUSSION**

**District Accountant**  
Robert Stilts, CPA

During regularly scheduled meter reads on November 12, 2019, Mr. and Mrs. Alton, at 1539 9<sup>th</sup> Street were recorded using higher than normal usage, the read was 703, the read from the previous cycle was 653. This resulted in the customer receiving a bill for 50 units/\$571.25 (9/10/19 to 11/12/19), invoice date was November 20, 2019. Water crews routinely verify the meter read within two days of the original read if the read comes in higher than normal. When the meter in question was re-read, on November 15, 2019, the read was 704, and the leak detector was not turning.

**Unit Chief**  
Scott M. Jalbert

**Battalion Chief**  
George Huang

On November 25, 2019 the Utility Billing Specialist compiled another work order for the meter to be read for one week, on three separate dates. The reads are below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Read</u>
11/27/2019	12:50pm	705
12/2/19	9:15am	706
12/4/19	12:52 pm	706

The reads show that the usage on the property was back within the "normal" range and no leak was present at the time of the reads and re-reads.

**Mailing Address:**  
P.O. Box 6064  
Los Osos, CA 93412

The residents were contacted by Jose Acosta, Utility Systems Manager to discuss the high usage and offer a bill amortization plan for repayment. Mrs. Alton expressed her disagreements with the readings and requested to be placed on the agenda for the next Board meeting, January 9, 2020 to request and adjustment to her higher than normal bill. Attached is the email with Mrs. Alton's request. Per District policy, the Utility Billing Specialist contacted the customer to make a payment equal to their average usage for the last six billing cycle's usage, approximately 10 units at \$148, and prior to being placed on the shutoff list, until the Board renders their decision on this matter at the January Board meeting.

**Offices:**  
2122 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 110  
Los Osos, CA 93402

**Phone:** 805/528-9370  
**FAX:** 805/528-9377

**SUMMARY**

Attached is Mr. and Mrs. Alton's transaction history, a copy of their bill, and copies of the work orders. Staff believes that the water passed through the meter, currently there is no

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leak, and the meter readings are accurate. District policy is to only provide a billing adjustment if there is a service line leak and it is repaired in a timely manner (policy attached). Since the customer's situation is outside staff's authority for an adjustment, staff is asking for Board direction on resolving the issue. As an alternative, the Board could consider a one-time leak credit based on the customer's past water use and payment history.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

If the Board determines an adjustment is warranted, the water revenue will decrease by whatever amount the Board decides to credit this account.

Attachments

<b>Notes Report</b>
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Limited to Date Range: 01/01/2019 through 12/27/2019

Limited to Individual: 01015

Sorted by Account Number

Account No.	Location No	Customer Name	Date	Category	Subject	Print On Bill
01015	04118	CHRISTINE ALTON	04/18/2019	ACCOUNT NOTE	Emergency Info	No
<b>Note:</b> Michael Shiers: 805-215-8230						
			05/20/2019	PDF E-BILL SENT	PDF BILLS SENT	No
<b>Note:</b> PDF BILLS NOTICE SENT TO CUSTOMER						
			07/19/2019	PDF E-BILL SENT	PDF BILLS SENT	No
<b>Note:</b> PDF BILLS NOTICE SENT TO CUSTOMER						
			09/20/2019	PDF E-BILL SENT	PDF BILLS SENT	No
<b>Note:</b> PDF BILLS NOTICE SENT TO CUSTOMER						
			11/19/2019	ACCOUNT NOTE	High Consumption	No
<b>Note:</b> Customer was on hi/lo report with higher than normal usage, 50 units. Re-read was correct, leak indicator was not spinning at the time of re-read. DH was left to notify customer.						
Re-read on 11/15/19 of 704 and another due to work order on 11/19/19 with same read of 704. Spoke with Christine Alton stating no one was contacted as requested and that there was no possible way that 50 units had been used. At that time work order had not been returned for the day, and did not have the new re-read to provide her an update. Once received, I notified Carol as Christine asked for her by name. Carol stated she would make the necessary calls and speak with Jose.						
			11/20/2019	PDF E-BILL SENT	PDF BILLS SENT	No
<b>Note:</b> PDF BILLS NOTICE SENT TO CUSTOMER						
			11/27/2019	ACCOUNT NOTE	Usage and Billing Dispute	No
<b>Note:</b> As the customer has requested to go before the board, monitoring of usage has been assigned per WO. Average billing amount to pay on current bill was agreed upon between Christine Alton and Laura Durban. Christine will make a \$148 payment prior to billing due date of 12/15/19. Exemptions have been set on the account for the forwarding balance until the issue has been resolved. If payment arrangements are made, the exemption will be adjusted to accomodate.						
12.6.19- WO completed and no sign of leaks. Jose spoke with Christine of options and attached updated email confirms Christine has chose to go before the board in January. Payment of \$148 is still expected before 12/15/19 and exemptions still in place for no penalties or lock out.						

**Work Order**

Los Osos CSD

Work Order No: 00000003604

Work Order Code & Desc: PRF - PROOF READ & CHECK

**Information Assigned by Office**

Name:	<u>CHRISTINE ALTON</u>	Phone No:	<u>(805)528-3254</u>
Service Id:	<u>04118</u>	Issue Date:	<u>11/18/2019 10:42</u>
Account No:	<u>01015</u>	Process Date:	<u>11/19/2019</u>
Route:	<u>205</u> <u>READ SEQ 00280</u>	Process Time:	<u>11:00 AM</u>
Address:	<u>1539 9TH ST</u>	Requested By:	<u></u>
Meter No:	<u>OB35172289</u>	Assigned To:	<u>By: CG</u>

**Comments:** PRF - PROOF READ & CHECK LEAKS

Please read and check for leak. Customer is on HI-LO report and would like to know if this read indicates they are trending unusually up again in usage. Please call Michael @ 805-215-8230 as he would like to make appointment to meet him when you do the read. Last read was 6 units new read is 50 units. I will call with the results. Thank You

**FAXED**  
11.19.19  
8:10 AM

**Information From the Field**

Old Meter Reading:	<u></u>	Old Meter No:	<u>OB35172289</u>	Remote Meter No:	<u></u>
New Meter Reading:	<u></u>	New Meter No:	<u></u>	Seal No:	<u></u>
Location:	<u>L</u>	Previous Read:	<u>653.00000</u>	Date:	<u>09/10/2019</u>
Work Done By:	<u>RF</u>	Date Completed:	<u>11/19/19</u>		

*\* initial read on 11/12/19*

*READ - 0704*

*second read from HI/LO on 11/18/19*

*TIME - 1038*

*Order generated 11/18 &*

*verread 11/19/19*

*- NO LEAKS MTR OK*

*- TRIED TO CALL PROPERTY OWNER, NO ANSWER*

*Carol spoke with Michael Alton who stated he did speak with Met regarding issues.*

FOLLOW UP REQUIRED? YES

Los Osos CSD

**Work Order**

Work Order No: 00000003615

Work Order Code & Desc: PRF - PROOF READ & CHECK

**Information Assigned by Office**

Name: CHRISTINE ALTON  
Service Id: 04118  
Account No: 01015  
Route: 205 READ SEQ: 00280  
Address: 1539 9TH ST  
Meter No: OB35172289

Phone No: (805)528-3254  
Issue Date: 11/25/2019 13:43  
Process Date: 11/26/2019  
Process Time: 02:00 PM  
Requested By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Assigned To: \_\_\_\_\_ By: CG

**Comments:** PRF - PROOF READ & CHECK LEAKS

Per Jose and Laura, please obtain reads on the following days:

- Wed 11/27/19
- Mon 12/2/19
- Wed 12/4/19

Thank you

**FAXED**  
11.27.19  
8:14 AM

**Information From the Field**

Old Meter Reading: \_\_\_\_\_ Old Meter No: OB35172289 Remote Meter No: \_\_\_\_\_  
New Meter Reading: \_\_\_\_\_ New Meter No: \_\_\_\_\_ Seal No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: L Previous Read: 703.00000 Date: 11/12/2019  
Work Done By: Clint Repa / Frank Asuncion Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

~~11/27/2019~~ 11/27/2019: 705.55 @ 12:50

12.2.19, 9:15 AM = 0706.09, LEAK INDICATOR NOT MOVING

12.4.19 (12:52 PM) = 0706.28, " "

FOLLOW UP REQUIRED? \_\_\_\_\_

# Customer Transaction Summary

**Customer Information**

Account No: 01015  
 CHRISTINE ALTON  
 1539 9TH ST  
 LOS OSOS, CA 93402

**Location Information**

Location No: 04118  
 1539 9TH ST  
 LOS OSOS, CA 93402

Date	Type	More Info	Reading	Usage	Prior Balance	Transaction Amount	Balance
12/10/2018	Payment	CHECK			100.00	-100.00	0.00
01/18/2019	Charge	01/08/2019	614	7	0.00	115.50	115.50
02/13/2019	Payment	CHECK			115.50	-115.50	0.00
03/20/2019	Charge	03/12/2019	621	7	0.00	115.50	115.50
04/12/2019	Payment	CHECK			115.50	-115.50	0.00
05/20/2019	Charge	05/08/2019	630	9	0.00	131.00	131.00
06/12/2019	Payment	CHECK			131.00	-131.00	0.00
07/19/2019	Charge	07/09/2019	642	12	0.00	157.75	157.75
08/12/2019	Payment	CHECK			157.75	-157.75	0.00
09/20/2019	Charge	09/10/2019	653	11	0.00	148.25	148.25
10/10/2019	Payment	CHECK			148.25	-148.25	0.00
11/20/2019	Charge	11/12/2019	703	50	0.00	571.25	571.25

**From:** [Laura Durban](#)  
**To:** "[Christine Alton](#)"  
**Subject:** RE: Water spike  
**Date:** Monday, December 9, 2019 8:07:00 AM

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Hi Christine,

Yes, but your property will be it's own item. First our General Manager Ron Munds will present, and if the Board has any questions they will ask Ron. Then they will ask you to come up and share your case. Then by Government code it gets open up to public comment. After that the Board will discuss and make a decision.

Normally public request and General action items are towards the end of the meeting, but I will not know for certain until the Agenda is finalized on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

I will let Jose know to be on the lookout for you that evening as well.

Thank you,



**Laura Durban**  
**Administrative Services Manager**  
Los Osos Community Services District  
Office: (805) 528-9435 Fax: (805) 528-9377  
2122 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 110, Los Osos, CA 93402  
[www.losososcscsd.org](http://www.losososcscsd.org)

**From:** Christine Alton <ccontedesign@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 7, 2019 7:27 AM  
**To:** Laura Durban <ldurban@losososcscsd.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Water spike

Thank you Laura, Laura

We will be there at 7 pm. Jan. 9th We will be there 6:45 to meet Jose to introduce ourselves to him. Haven't been to a board meeting, not sure how the whole thing works, however, I remember watching when the whole sewer was going On and people take turns to talk so I'm assuming it will be like that.

See you then  
Mike and Christine

On Friday, December 6, 2019, Laura Durban <[ldurban@losososcscsd.org](mailto:ldurban@losososcscsd.org)> wrote:

Hi Christine,

I fully understand. I will put you on the Agenda for the January meeting. It's scheduled for Thursday January 9<sup>th</sup>. Open session starts at 7pm. I don't know at this time what item you are on the Agenda, so to be safe I would recommend being available by 7pm. Jose Acosta, the Utility Systems Manager you spoke with yesterday, will be your point of contact as I will be taking the minutes at the meeting and will not be able to interact during the meeting. Jose will try to touch base with you before your item is called on the Agenda. On the Friday before I post the Agenda for the public and I will email it to you that day as well. It will also be posted on our website.

Thank you for paying the \$148 for your average usage, and I will make sure that no interest or anything happens to the remainder until it's been discussed at the Board meeting and a plan has been made.

Thank you,



**Laura Durban**  
**Administrative Services Manager**  
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**From:** Christine Alton <[ccontedesign@gmail.com](mailto:ccontedesign@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 5, 2019 7:03 PM  
**To:** Laura Durban <[ldurban@losososcscsd.org](mailto:ldurban@losososcscsd.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Water spike

Hi Laura,

I did talk with the manager today and he said they haven't found any leaks, so we could still go before the board if we chose to. Yes we still want to go to the January meeting. We still have no proof here of 30,000 gallons of water being used.

I will still pay the 148 this month and wait to see what the board says. It's just so upsetting and such a mystery to say ok will just pay the extra 375, when we have no proof of any water overage here at the property

I certainly hope you understand.  
Thank you again for your help.  
Christine  
Please let me know the exact date and time we need to be there.

On Wednesday, November 27, 2019, Christine Alton <[ccontedesign@gmail.com](mailto:ccontedesign@gmail.com)> wrote:

Thank you, I will pay the 148.00 before December 15 when it is due. We sure hope something is found out , we are still so baffled by the whole thing. Thank you again for your help.

Christine

On Tuesday, November 26, 2019, Laura Durban <[ldurban@losososcscsd.org](mailto:ldurban@losososcscsd.org)> wrote:

Hi Christine,

That is correct. We are putting a hold on the Interest on the remainder of the balance until we know more, or go to the Board. If you would like to pay what your average water bill is at \$148 that would work. We were just looking at your water usage from this time a year ago which was where we got \$100.

Thank you,



**Laura Durban**

**Administrative Services Manager**

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**From:** Christine Alton <[ccontedesign@gmail.com](mailto:ccontedesign@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Monday, November 25, 2019 4:45 PM

**To:** Laura Durban <[ldurban@losososcscsd.org](mailto:ldurban@losososcscsd.org)>

**Subject:** Re: Water spike

On Monday, November 25, 2019, Laura Durban <[ldurban@losososcscsd.org](mailto:ldurban@losososcscsd.org)> wrote:

Hi Christine,

So I won't be charged the internet on my 571.00 bill? My bill has been about 148 so should I pay that instead of 100? Thank you.

I had an opportunity to speak with our Utilities Services Manager about this, and our water crew is in the process of doing more re-reads of the meter. We have to follow our procedure to make sure that water is still not going through your meter in case there is a leak underground, or in another area. Once we can rule out that your water usage is back to normal, we can proceed with going to the Board. Unfortunately due to the procedure of re-reads, the soonest I can get your request to the Board is on January 9<sup>th</sup> if water usage is back to normal.

For this current billing cycle, you only have to pay your usage from this time last year

which is \$100 and we will not require the overage to be paid at this time. Once we finish the meter reads, we can see if there is an issue, and if not you can go to the board in January.

Thank you,



**Laura Durban**  
**Administrative Services Manager**  
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**From:** Christine Alton <[ccontedesign@gmail.com](mailto:ccontedesign@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 25, 2019 12:32 PM  
**To:** Laura Durban <[ldurban@losososcsd.org](mailto:ldurban@losososcsd.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Water spike

Hi Laura, I wonder if you've heard back from the board about the upcoming Dec. 12 th meeting. My husband and I are anxious to speak with them.

Thank you,  
Christine

On Wednesday, November 20, 2019, Christine Alton <[ccontedesign@gmail.com](mailto:ccontedesign@gmail.com)> wrote:

Thank you for your help.

On Tuesday, November 19, 2019, Laura Durban <[ldurban@losososcsd.org](mailto:ldurban@losososcsd.org)> wrote:

Hi Christine,

I wanted to let you know I received your email and I have sent it to those that make the decision. I should know in the next couple of days and I will get back to you.

Thank you,



**Laura Durban**  
**Administrative Services Manager**  
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**From:** Christine Alton <[ccontedesign@gmail.com](mailto:ccontedesign@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2019 3:45 PM

**To:** Laura Durban <[ldurban@losososcscsd.org](mailto:ldurban@losososcscsd.org)>

**Subject:** Water spike

Dear Laura,

In regards to our conversation, we would like to go before the board December 12, 2019.

Thank you,  
Christine Alton

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Christine Alton  
Design Consultant  
805.458.3816

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Christine Alton  
Design Consultant  
805.458.3816