

## **Statement on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency**

### **LVMWD Board President Jay Lewitt**

March 25, 2020

Hi, I'm Jay Lewitt, Board President of Las Virgenes Municipal Water District and Chairman of the Board for the Las Virgenes – Triunfo Joint Powers Authority.

Just like you, I am at home social distancing. And I wanted to take this opportunity as your water and wastewater provider to reassure you that your tap water is completely safe to drink and that your wastewater plant is operating full strength.

As you are all aware, our community, along with the entire world, is facing a historic challenge to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and “flatten the curve” to avoid overwhelming the capacity of our health care system.

As cases of COVID-19 began to appear in California, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency on March 4th.

Shortly thereafter, on March 13th, the President of the United States declared a national emergency.

As of last Friday, March 20th, the County of Los Angeles and the entire State of California are under a “stay-at-home” order, meaning residents are to remain in their homes with the exception of essential travel, such as doctor appointments and grocery shopping.

The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District has monitored the situation closely, beginning with the spread of COVID-19 beyond the borders of Wuhan, China and across Europe.

As the situation has quickly escalated and after closely monitoring the latest developments, the LVMWD Board decided yesterday to take decisive action with an emergency declaration to:

- Help our customers during this difficult time,

- Minimize the expose of our employees to COVID-19, and
- Ensure that we maintain the continuity of our water and wastewater services.

We have taken a series of emergency actions to respond to this unprecedented, ever-changing, and dynamic situation.

Here is a summary:

- LVMWD customers **will not** encounter service shutoffs, late fees or door tags during this pandemic. The Board recognizes the hardship that the coronavirus is having on families, and we will not deny an essential service during this critical time. Water is absolutely paramount to public health, and you can rest assured it will be available to you, in your homes, no matter what.
- All of our customer service is now being provided by phone or on-line. Beginning on March 16th, our District offices were closed to the public until further notice. However, we are just a phone call way to help you.
- Finally, the District has implemented alternative working arrangements to protect its employees from exposure to COVID-19 and to ensure they can maintain continuous water and wastewater services to your home.

I'd also like to take this time to assure you of this: Your water is completely safe to drink and will continue to flow, no matter what. LVMWD has contingencies in place, including mutual aid agreements, that allow for the sharing of resources in the event of extreme circumstances.

During this time of uncertainty, LVMWD has got you covered. Customer service representatives are still available via phone to answer any questions you make have. Select staff remain on hand, in limited numbers, to guarantee the continued delivery of your water. Emergency on-call response is still available.

I'd also like to emphasize something that we might not think too much about: what we flush down our toilets. It is important to maintain a safe and clean environment where, now more than ever, disinfection is critical to minimize the

spread of, or exposure to, the coronavirus. However, we cannot flush disinfectant wipes down the toilet because they will clog our sewer pipes and possibly create another public health issue with sanitary sewer overflows. We ask that you please discard them into the trash can instead of flushing.

Our community is no stranger to adversity, and we have shown time and time again the strength of our unity and resolve in the face of difficulty. Now, we must unite in a different way. I encourage you all to adhere to the CDC's recommendations to "flatten the curve", remaining home as much as possible, frequently wash your hands, and maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet when in public.

Finally, I want to send my thoughts out everyone who has been directly affected by COVID-19 infection. We are all rooting for your full and quick recovery. LVMWD remains as connected as ever with our community during this time, and we will be here for our customers through it all. Thank you.

**#####**