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California Water Service Takes Action to Relieve Financially Strapped Customers of Water Bill Debt Accumulated During Pandemic

SAN JOSE, Calif., Nov. 30, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- California Water Service (Cal Water) has filed an application with the State Water Resources Control Board to help provide financial support to customers who were unable to pay their water bills during the coronavirus pandemic. The funding, which Cal Water advocated to help secure, will enable the utility to forgive past-due balances incurred by its customers between March 2020 and mid-June 2021.

In the application, Cal Water requested \$20.8 million in relief for customers across its California service areas. The company anticipates receiving final approval by the State Water Resources Control Board around the first of the year. Customers do not have to apply for the debt forgiveness; if approved, Cal Water will apply any credits to affected customers' accounts within 60 days after receiving funding from the state, expected to be in early 2022.

"While life is returning to some sense of normalcy from the coronavirus, we know that many of our customers continue to struggle to make ends meet," said Martin A. Kropelnicki, President and CEO. "Providing debt forgiveness is one way we can keep our customers who are experiencing financial hardship from having to worry about their water bill."

This measure is the latest step by Cal Water to support customers who have been financially affected by the pandemic. In addition to the debt forgiveness application, customers with remaining balances that pre-date the pandemic or have accrued after June 15, 2021, can take advantage of interest- and penalty-free payment plans or extensions, preventing them from becoming subject to potential disruptions in water service after the moratorium on disconnections for non-payment expires. Income-eligible customers may also enroll in Cal Water's Customer Assistance Program, which provides qualifying customers with a discount on their monthly service charge.

About Cal Water

California Water Service serves about 2 million people through 492,600 service connections in California. The utility has provided water service in the state since 1926. Additional information may be obtained online at www.calwater.com.

This news release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning established by the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 ("Act"). The forward-looking statements are intended to qualify under provisions of the federal securities laws for "safe harbor" treatment established by the Act. Forward-looking statements are based on currently available information, expectations, estimates, assumptions and projections, and management's judgment about the Company, the water utility industry and general economic

conditions. Such words as will, would, expects, intends, plans, believes, estimates, assumes, anticipates, projects, predicts, forecasts or variations of such words or similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. The forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance. They are subject to uncertainty and changes in circumstances. Actual results may vary materially from what is contained in a forward-looking statement. Factors that may cause a result different than expected or anticipated include, but are not limited to: natural disasters, public health crises, pandemics, epidemics or outbreaks of a contagious disease, such as the outbreak of coronavirus (or COVID-19), governmental and regulatory commissions' decisions, including decisions on our GRC and on proper disposition of property; consequences of eminent domain actions relating to our water systems; changes in regulatory commissions' policies and procedures; the timeliness of regulatory commissions' actions concerning rate relief and other actions; changes in water quality standards; changes in environmental compliance and water quality requirements; electric power interruptions; housing and customer growth trends; the impact of opposition to rate increases; our ability to recover costs; availability of water supplies; issues with the implementation, maintenance or security of our information technology systems; civil disturbances or terrorist threats or acts; the adequacy of our efforts to mitigate physical and cyber security risks and threats; the ability of our enterprise risk management processes to identify or address risks adequately; labor relations matters as we negotiate with unions; changes in customer water use patterns and the effects of conservation; the impact of weather, climate, natural disasters, and diseases on water quality, water availability, water sales and operating results, and the adequacy of our emergency preparedness; and, other risks and unforeseen events. When considering forward-looking statements, you should keep in mind the cautionary statements included in this paragraph, as well as the annual 10-K, Quarterly 10-Q, and other reports filed from time-to-time with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The Company assumes no obligation to provide public updates of forward-looking statements.