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California Water Service Group and Subsidiaries Suspend Shutoffs for Customers Unable to Make Payments Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Utility Also Closing Customer Center Lobbies, Taking Additional Steps to Keep Employees, Community Safe

SAN JOSE, Calif., March 12, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- In an effort to keep its customers safe during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, California Water Service Group (Group) (NYSE: CWT) and its subsidiaries in California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Washington have temporarily suspended water service shutoffs for customers unable to make utility bill payments until further notice. This decision was approved at Group's internal task force meeting regarding COVID-19 today.

Group is closely monitoring developments regarding COVID-19 and taking a number of additional, precautionary steps to help keep its employees and communities safe during this time. Among the actions taken by the utility are:

- Closing Customer Center lobbies to the public to minimize personal contact; representatives remain available to support customers via phone, email, and online, and for service calls
- Increasing daily and deep-cleaning and disinfecting of facilities
- Suspending business air travel and employee participation at conferences, and limiting meeting sizes
- Providing hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes in all common areas and field trucks
- Frequently communicating with employees on developments, company updates, social distancing measures, and personal hygiene best practices, and reminding them to stay home if sick
- Retaining an infectious disease doctor to ensure the company takes all appropriate steps to support a healthy workforce and community

The utility has also published a statement to confirm the safety of tap water, as the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have said that the safeguards utilities already take to protect water quality are also effective to keep it safe from viruses, including COVID-19.

"Protecting the health and safety of our customers and employees is our highest priority, and not only are we maintaining a robust water quality assurance program, we are also continuing to do everything we can to further maintain a healthy workforce and community with regard to the coronavirus," said Martin A. Kropelnicki, Group President and CEO. "This includes today's formal steps of temporarily suspending shutoffs for nonpayment, so customers have the water they need to maintain good personal hygiene, and closing our Customer Centers to the public."

The utility's COVID-19 task force is closely monitoring developments regarding the coronavirus and will take any additional steps to support its communities and employees, as needed.

About California Water Service Group

California Water Service Group is the parent company of California Water Service, Washington Water Service, New Mexico Water Service, Hawaii Water Service, CWS Utility Services, and HWS Utility Services. Together, these companies provide regulated and non-regulated water service to more than 2 million people in California, Washington, New Mexico, and Hawaii. California Water Service Group's common stock trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "CWT." Additional information is available online at www.calwatergroup.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 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: governmental and regulatory commissions' decisions; 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; inability to renew leases to operate city water systems on beneficial terms; changes in California State Water Resources Control Board water quality standards; changes in environmental compliance and water quality requirements; electric power interruptions; changes in customer water use patterns and the effects of conservation; the impact of weather and climate on water availability, water sales and operating results; the unknown impact of contagious diseases, on the Company's operations; civil disturbances or terrorist threats or acts, or apprehension about the possible future occurrences of acts of this type; labor relations matters as we negotiate with the unions; restrictive covenants in or changes to the credit ratings on our current or future debt that could increase our financing costs or affect our ability to borrow, make payments on debt or pay dividends; 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. The Company assumes no obligation to provide public updates of forward-looking statements.