

Hearing Senate Committee on Natural Resources – Public Comment related to AB104

May 8, 2025 - Laura McSwain – Founder and President, Water Fairness Coalition, Inc.

Thank you, Chair Cruz-Crawford and committee members, for the opportunity to speak today. I would also like to thank you Chair Cruz-Crawford, Vice Chair Scheible, and Senator Rochelle Nguyen for bringing the conceptual amendment that includes the removal of the SNWA amended language in section 21.3.

For the benefit of those who might not be familiar with Excessive Use Charge penalties, they were imposed upon Las Vegas Valley Water District Customers beginning January 1, 2023. They are based on a one-size-fits-all water threshold regardless of lot size and family circumstances. LVVWD representatives continually say that they only intended to target the top 10% of water users. At the time they were developed internal documents indicate that they had 374,289 Single Family active services and expected that the rules change would impact 37,430 customers.

However, on July 17, 2023, it was reported by the Review Journal that 60,000 customers had been charged with these penalties.

Those who have been forced into compliance have done so to avoid bankruptcy or foreclosure. The resulting damage to our urban tree canopy is visible throughout the valley as we need it most for heat mitigation and air quality protection. It is no wonder the record temperatures, increased number of pollution days and the over 500 heat related deaths that were experienced in 2024.

The EUC's were adopted without direct prior notification to LVVWD customers. The fact that amendment 21.3 was adopted and passed in the assembly without a hearing was yet an additional slight to LVVWD customers.

The good news is that advances in technology in water savings through drought tolerant turf varieties and irrigation technologies have been demonstrated to create the water savings SNWA seeks and allows for the preservation of the very elements of the community that will maintain the Las Vegas valley Oasis that we inherited. It is our obligation to be stewards of the community's environment for future generations.

Again, thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to address this critical issue.