Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe PUBLIC UTILITIES DISTRICT

BILLING & COLLECTION POLICY

This statement of official Public Utilities District policy establishes standards for the timely collection of all debts owed to the Public Utility District.

Section 1. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all Public Utility District customers to insure compliance with these policies and procedures in accordance with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Ordinance Number 51 (Water & Sewer Ordinance). Administration of the policies and procedures is the responsibility of the Public Utility District located at the Tribal Environmental Department, 208 Capital Hill, Nixon, NV 89424.

Section 2. Scope

This collection policy applies to:

- Any customer with a new or a current billing account,
- The personnel responsible for administration of the Billing policy, which includes but not limited to the PUD staff, PUD Board members, and Tribal administrative staff; and
- Any private counsel or private collection agency employed by the Tribe for the purpose of debt collection.

Section 3. Customer Account Rights and Responsibilities

Section 3.1 Rights

Each account holder has the right:

- To have access to information about the nature and amount of the charges incurred;
- To receive their monthly bill in a timely manner, unless extreme circumstances occur;
- To have access to information on payment procedures;
- To have access to the account record of the customer;
- To dispute charges believed to be in error;
- To petition for removal of charges due to changes in their account status, including change of residency, disability or elderly status;
- To have the confidentiality of the account protected to the extent of the law;
- To be notified of any impending collection action;
- To be treated with respect and be free from harassment; and
- To have access to all Tribal ordinances or policies governing the account.

Section 3.2 Responsibilities

Each account holder has the responsibility:

- To read and comply with all written policies and procedures governing their account;
- To insure payment of all charges legitimately incurred on the account by the payment due date;
- Homeowners are responsible for all charges regardless of tenants occupancy;
- To notify and request a change of address form to update address and names on account;
- To notify PUD in the event that the homeowner changes;
- To insure that the billing address is correct;
- To notify the PUD if no billing statement is received;
- To submit disputes of charges in writing within 10 days;
- To pay all penalties, legal fees and incurred costs associated with collection of the account.

Section 4. PUD Responsibilities

The PUD will be responsible for providing accurate and timely billing information to customers. The billing cycle will be every 30 days with subsequent 30 days being invoiced. All bills will be mailed prior to the first of the billed month.

Section 5. Payment

- The PUD will take appropriate steps; including withholding of services, to collect debts owed the PUD.
- Payment Requirements: All payment requirements will be established by the PUD and PUD Board, and will be clearly disclosed.
- Payment Options: Standardized payment options will be provided to enable customers to meet their financial obligations with the PUD.

Section 6. Payment Plans

Section 6.1 Account Payment Plans

The PUD shall provide standardized payment plan options to assist an individual in meeting their financial obligation to PUD. All plan requirements or agreements will be documented by the PUD, and shall be clearly disclosed in writing to the customer.

Section 6.2 Payment Arrangements

If a financial hardship prevents a customer from making payment in full, a formal payment arrangement may be established with the PUD. However, once a debt has been referred to an outside collection agency, all arrangements for repayment will be made with the outside collection agency.

Section 7. Contested Charges

The PUD will address any contested charges as part of the grievance procedures stated in PL Ordinance No. 51 and 52. However, if the customer wishes to appeal the decision of the PUD, then the customer can make a formal appeal to the PUD Board for resolution.

The account holder loses the right to petition once an account has been referred to a collection agency.

Section 8. Non-Payment of Customer Accounts

An account is past due when payment of the amount due has not been received by the close of business on the due date. A minimum grace period of five (5) working days will be allowed for payment. Failure to pay by that time will result in:

Section 8.1 Late Payment Penalties

The amount of the late payment penalty will be \$2.00 per each 30 days the account is past due. All customers will be notified of any changes to the late payment penalty.

Section 8.2 Cessation of Services

All accounts that are past due greater than 60 days will have services ceased immediately until the account has been brought current or a payment plan has been agreed upon by the customer and PUD.

Section 8.3 Holds

All seriously past due accounts (90 days or greater) will have a hold placed on the accounts. Any requests for new services or a new account will be denied until a payment plan has been arranged and only if it is current.

Section 8.4 Delinquent Accounts

Delinquent accounts will be prepared for collection as defined in section 12 of this policy. An account is delinquent when:

- A customer account has a balance owing and no longer has a service address, OR
- A customer account has an account balance more than 120 days past due.

Section 9. Customer Default

If no mutually satisfactory agreement can be reached to bring the account current or if the customer fails to meet the terms of any payment plan, the PUD may accelerate collection efforts on the debt in accordance with Section 12 of this policy.

Section 10. Returned Checks

A returned check is any check tendered to the Tribe that is subsequently dishonored by the bank. The following steps will be taken to deter any repeat issuance of a returned check by an account holder:

Section 10.1 Returned Check Penalty

A penalty will be charged to the account in an amount established by the Tribe. The penalty may be waived if the check was returned in error from the bank (written confirmation required).

Section 10.2 Payment of a Returned Check Item

The returned check must be paid by cash, certified check, or money order.

Section 10.3 Loss of Privileges

An account holder who has written two or more returned checks will lose checkcashing privileges for a period not to exceed two (2) years.

Section 10.4 Non-Payment

If the returned check was intended as payment of a customer account, it will be considered a non-payment and subject to the conditions listed in Section 8 of this policy.

Section 11. Notification

Reasonable measures will be taken to insure that all customers are informed of general policies and procedures of the PUD related to PUD billing accounts, and of the financial status of the customer's PUD account. All bills and written correspondence will be mailed to the most recent active address on file for the customer. Electronic notification may be used if the account holder has provided an e-mail.

Section 12. Customer Account Collections

Collection is initiated when an account becomes delinquent, and there are no satisfactory payment arrangements in place as provided in Section 8 of this policy. The collection process may be expedited or delayed as deemed necessary. The PUD will normally take the following actions to collect a delinquent account:

Section 12.1 Courtesy Contacts

The PUD will make a reasonable effort to notify the account holder of the status of the account, and of possible referral to an outside collection agency.

Section 12.2 Placement with an Outside Collection Agency

If the account holder fails to respond to the courtesy contacts, the debt will be referred to an outside collection agency for further action.

Section 12.3 Credit Reporting

Upon second placement of an account with a private collection agency, individuals who have failed to pay their delinquent account balance may be reported to one or more nationally recognized credit reporting bureaus. The collection agency will be responsible for the initial report, and for all future status updates.

Section 12.4 Tribal Court

The PUD shall have the option at any time to file an action in the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Court to collect on any continually delinquent account.