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City of Sebastopol**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACTS:** City of Sebastopol

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City of Sebastopol Adopts BayREN Water Upgrades \$ave Program

Sebastopol, Calif., (February 4, 2021) – The City of Sebastopol is adopting the new [BayREN Water Upgrades \\$ave](#) program after a vote by the Sebastopol City Council at their January 19 meeting. Sebastopol is the first Bay Area city to enroll in the program. The new regional water efficiency finance service from the Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) with fiscal sponsorship from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) provides benefits and savings to both municipal water customers and to the municipalities that administer water service. The program is slated to roll out to customers in April 2021.

Through this program, Sebastopol municipal water customers can install indoor and outdoor water efficiency upgrades, such as showerheads, aerators, and high-efficiency toilets. Participants have upgrades installed through vetted contractors with no up-front costs. Upgrade costs will be part of a monthly on-bill charge that is significantly lower than the estimated savings, so water customers will start saving money right away.

The program benefits the City of Sebastopol water utility as Water Upgrades \$ave will administer and operate the program on behalf of Sebastopol and other future participating local governments and their water utilities. Sebastopol Vice Mayor and Water Subcommittee Member Sarah Glade Gurney said, “The program will be turn-key for us where we won’t have to make any additional hires, and we won’t have to manage it. For an understaffed small city with a lot of older houses, the program offers great benefit.”

The program also helps municipalities and communities be more resilient in the face of drought and limited water supplies and assists them in meeting state and local water efficiency goals. Additionally, Water Upgrades \$ave program helps support underserved customers (low and moderate income

customers and renters), and produces water and energy savings for all customers. Says Gurney, “the Water Upgrades \$ave program will benefit local governments by buffering the impact of our [January 7, 2020] rate increase. It will also help our local citizens by giving them an affordable tool to lower their water and energy use.”

The Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) is Sonoma County’s BayREN representative and serves as Program Manager for Water Upgrades \$ave. The program was featured at the California Public Utilities Commission’s Clean Energy Financing Workshop on January 29, 2021, as an example of an inclusive financing program.

More information may be found at www.waterupgradessave.org.

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