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Dear Valued Customer:

You may have heard that on November 2, 2017, unknown hackers broke into West Kern Water District's administrative database. We have no reason to believe the hacker, or anyone else, will be able to access your personal information.

But on behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to provide you an overview of what happened, what the District is doing, and what actions we recommend you take.

What happened?

On November 2, 2017, an unknown hacker broke into the District's computer system.

The District is continuing to investigate the nature of the attack, It does appear the hacker broke into the Districts system and deleted certain files.

It does not appear any files; including files with personal customer information were removed or copied. But if any files were removed, they are protected by their own specialized security features. This should make them impossible for the hacker or anyone else to read.

In the highly unlikely event that someone is able to get around the files' security features, the files did contain customer names, addresses, phone numbers, and driver's license numbers. No customer social security numbers are at risk; The District does not collect social security numbers.

What is the District doing?

The District is pursuing several options to recover all of its electronic files and evaluate digital security.

After the District has guaranteed recovery of its electronic files, it will perform a full digital security audit and make any changes necessary to better safeguard the District's computer system.

The District is also considering several options to ensure that regular, accurate bills are delivered as usual. We do not anticipate any major billing issues, but if you notice anything unusual, please let us know.

What should customers do now?

You may, understandably, be asking what other steps you can take to protect yourself.

Although the District's files are protected in a way that makes them unable to be read outside of the District's network, a common recommendation is to freeze your credit out of an abundance of caution.

A credit freeze will keep anyone from accessing your credit report; this includes the ability to open a bank account or credit card, without a password.

Instructions about how to place a freeze on your credit reports, and the advantages and disadvantages of a credit freeze, are attached for your reference.

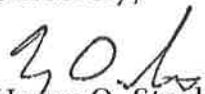
We know you may be feeling vulnerable. The District will do everything in its power to keep you informed.

If you are interested in participating in the District's decision making process, we encourage you to attend a meeting of the District's Board of Directors. Regular meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the District's office. Because of Thanksgiving, the District's November meeting will be held on November 21, 2017.

While the District is working on getting its systems back fully functioning, there may be some times when our customer service representatives are pulled to other tasks, or working with other customers. If you have questions and are not able to reach a District representative, please call back.

We look forward to answering your questions, and providing more information, as it is available. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Sincerely,


Harry O. Starkey
General Manager

How to Freeze Your Credit Reports

If you are concerned about identity theft, data breaches, or someone gaining access to your credit report without your permission, you might consider placing a credit freeze on your credit report.

What is a credit freeze?

Also known as a “security freeze,” this tool allows you to restrict access to your credit report, making it more difficult for identity thieves to open new accounts in your name. Most creditors, like banks or credit card companies, need to see your credit report before they approve a new account. If they cannot access your credit report, they may not extend credit.

Does a credit freeze affect my credit score?

No. A credit freeze does not affect your credit score.

What are the advantages of a credit freeze?

If a thief wants to open a bank or credit card account in your name, the bank or credit card company normally requests a copy of your credit report from one or more of the three nationwide credit reporting companies. If you have a credit freeze, the credit reporting company will not release your credit report without a password that you will receive when you place the credit freeze.

If the thief does not have your password, then the bank or Credit Card Company will not be able to pull your credit report, and should not allow the thief to open an account in your name.

What are the disadvantages of a credit freeze?

If you need to access, or allow someone to access, your credit report, you will need to unfreeze your credit report. You might need to unfreeze your credit report to open a new bank or credit card account, apply for a job, rent an apartment, or buy insurance.

Freezing and unfreezing your account may require a fee. The fee is commonly between \$5 and \$10.

Freezing and unfreezing your account may take several phone calls and several days. It is best to check with the credit reporting company in advance, so that you know how long it may take to unfreeze your account.

How do I place a freeze on my credit reports?

Contact each of the nationwide credit reporting companies:

- Equifax: 1-800-349-9960
- Experian: 1-888-397-3742
- TransUnion: 1-888-909-8872

You will need to supply your name, address, date of birth, Social Security number, and other personal information.

After receiving your freeze request, each credit reporting company will send you a confirmation letter containing a unique password. Keep the password in a safe place; you will need it if you choose to lift the freeze.

How do I lift a freeze?

Contact each credit reporting company to lift the freeze. Be sure to have your password ready.