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Contact: Matt Sweeney, 608-266-9600

matthew.sweeney@wisconsin.gov

PSC Votes to Extend the COVID-19 Utility Disconnection Moratorium

MADISON - On Thursday, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) voted 2-1 to stay a portion of its June 26 order to extend the moratorium on utility residential customer disconnections and refusal of service for nonpayment until September 1. The additional time will allow PSC staff to collect more data and information from utilities on their disconnection plans, allow for comment from customer organizations, and monitor further the spread of COVID-19 in the state. The move comes as COVID-19 positive cases in Wisconsin have more than doubled since the PSC met in June to order the end of the moratorium.

"We continue to closely monitor COVID-19 and its impact on utility customers in Wisconsin. The data has shown that the coronavirus has ballooned since our discussion on June 11," said PSC Chairperson, Rebecca Cameron Valcq. "It is our obligation to strike a balance to ensure the financial health of utilities, but also ensure customer safeguards are in place. It is our role to provide clarity to utilities, but be nimble enough to press the pause button when it is in the public interest to do so. We must press the pause button today on utility disconnections as the risk to public health is far greater today than it was a month ago, while the financial impact to utilities has been minimal."

In light of the extension, the PSC is still strongly urging customers to seek a payment plan with their utility or apply for energy assistance to avoid a large debt and possible disconnection when the moratorium ends.

If customers are having difficulty paying their energy bills, they may be eligible for assistance from the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). To determine eligibility or find out where to apply for assistance, go to <http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov/> or call 1-866-HEATWIS.

If customers cannot reach an agreement with their utility, they are urged to contact the PSC by calling 1-800-225-7729, or by [filing a complaint on the PSC website](#).

In June, the PSC voted to lift the temporary moratorium on utility disconnections for nonpayment that was put in place in March, during the COVID-19 public health emergency. However, the PSC required that a utility postpone disconnection for 21 days

where there is a positive COVID-19 test and up to an additional 21 days if the person is still under quarantine following the original postponement.

The PSC is continuing to monitor utilities' disconnection plans, payment plan terms, and customer notices to ensure they conform to existing orders, administrative codes, and state law. The Commissioners plan to meet on August 20 to discuss if further modifications or extensions should be provided beyond September 1.

For information on the PSC's previous actions regarding utility disconnections for COVID-19, click [here](#).

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