



MEDIA ADVISORY

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PSC Approves Debt Forgiveness Pilot Program for Alliant Energy Customers

The program will help customers get out and stay out of debt

MADISON – On Tuesday, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) voted to approve an Arrears Management Program (AMP) proposed by Alliant Energy’s Wisconsin subsidiary, Wisconsin Power and Light (WPL). The approval of WPL’s AMP marks the most recent offering from Wisconsin’s large, investor-owned utilities to support low-income customers.

According to WPL, the AMP offers financial assistance to customers who are likely to be hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible, low-income residential customers would be automatically enrolled to receive a 25% reduction in their arrears balance and additional reductions each month they keep current with their utility bills.

“We’ve seen the effects of COVID-19 disproportionately impact people of color as well as low-income households,” said Rebecca Cameron Valcq, chairperson of the PSC. “Programs like these are not only the right thing to do, but our analysis shows that the benefits to the utility and all customers outweigh the costs.”

PSC staff’s analysis of the AMP found in all likely scenarios that the costs for forgiving the arrears would be offset by savings from more regular payments and reduced costs associated with disconnecting and reconnecting participating customers. The pilot was approved for one year. WPL will be required to provide regular reporting on program metrics, which will be reviewed by the PSC when WPL applies for the continuation of the program before the end of the pilot’s one year time period.

In its September 29, 2020 order related to COVID-19, the PSC directed all utilities to submit a comprehensive plan as to how they propose to address the financial impacts of customer arrears by January 15, 2021. This program does not fulfill this requirement, but rather seeks regulatory approval of a specific program that would constitute a part of the utility’s comprehensive planning and actions with regard to customer arrears.

In the same September 2020 order, the PSC extended the moratorium for disconnection of electric and natural gas service to November 1, 2020, coinciding with the start of the state annual home heating disconnection moratorium. Then, in its subsequent order of October 29, 2020, the Commission extended the moratorium on disconnection for all public utilities until April 15, 2021, which coincides with the end of the winter home heating disconnection moratorium.

For more information on the PSC’s analysis of WPL’s AMP and arrearage forgiveness programs from other utilities, click [here](#) to find PSC staff’s memorandum to the Commissioners.

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