

Huey, Lorilyn (UTC)

From: Gary Dirks (gary.d.dirks@gmail.com) Sent You a Personal Message <automail@knowwho.com>
Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 9:01 PM
To: Records Management (UTC)
Subject: Public Comment on Docket # U-200281

Categories: LH

External Email

Dear Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission,

National research of communities that have banned electricity and water service have had higher coronavirus infection rates. Stopping Shut Offs would be healthy in these communities.

I am writing to ask the Utilities and Transportation Commission extend the moratorium on utility shut offs until at least September.

It is now clear: the moratorium saves lives. A recent study by the National Bureau of Economic Research showed that the coronavirus infection rates last year were 4.4% lower in communities that banned electricity and water service disconnections during the pandemic, while death rates from the disease were 7.4% lower.

Almost a year into the COVID crisis, it is clearer than ever that the effects of the pandemic are not going away anytime soon. We need to and act on people's needs instead of those of profitable utility companies. Right now, up to 2.2 million people in Washington ? almost one-third of the state ? could be struggling to pay for food, according to recent reports. You have the power to ensure that we don't compound their suffering by turning off their electricity, too.

Washington can be a state where everyone -- no matter their race, income, or where they live -- has access to electricity. This is a state where people's health and well being, not corporate profits, can drive policymakers' decisions. Utilities are more essential than ever to keep our communities healthy and safe. Together, we must make sure that Washingtonians can count on essential utilities throughout the pandemic and beyond.

Please, keep the lights on.

Sincerely,

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