

Chiles, Pam (UTC)

From: Aniko Bahr (aniko.bahr@gmail.com) Sent You a Personal Message <automail@knowwho.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 2:57 PM
To: Records Management (UTC)
Subject: Public Comment on Docket # U-200281

Categories: PC

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Dear Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission,

As always, economically struggling communities are harder hit by health challenges than their better-off neighbors. The pandemic has borne out the age-old pattern. Please do not neglect the needier sectors in this critical period. Please vote to extend the ban on utilities disconnections for the sake of all of us, especially our collective conscience. Thank you!

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 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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