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State Of WASH.
UTIL. AND TRANSP.
COMMISSION



BLUEGREEN ALLIANCE

WASHINGTON STATE

Dear Commissioners:

This is a comment regarding Docket # U-200281 on behalf of the Washington BlueGreen Alliance.

The Washington BlueGreen Alliance is a coalition of labor unions, environmental groups, and community organizations that work together to tackle climate change and other environmental challenges in a way that simultaneously promotes economic justice.

The COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted widespread economic and racial inequality in Washington. Similar to climate change, already vulnerable communities are the hardest hit. There can be no effective public health response without access to basic utilities like electricity and clean water. Guaranteed access to basic utilities is also a prerequisite for a fair and robust economic recovery.

The Washington BlueGreen Alliance asks that the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to do everything within its power to ensure that every Washington resident has access to stable and debt-free utility service—both during the pandemic and beyond. This is an important opportunity to build a more just utility system for future, and we strongly urge you to seize the chance to grow long-term resilience so we are better prepared to weather the next storm.

Most immediately, it is critical to offer immediate protection to Washingtonians by extending the moratorium on utility shutoffs until April 30 or until all counties are in Phase 4 of Washington's Safe Start Plan for 60 days. No Washington family should ever have to wonder how long they will be able to keep the lights on—this is especially true in the middle of a global pandemic. Next, it is vital to create just bill assistance and re-payment plans, including no debt for poor and working class families. In so doing, it is vital to ensure that ratepayers do not bear an unfair burden. As noted previously, COVID-19 has made clear the gross inequities in our current economic system. Let us not further exacerbate those inequities by unfairly distributing the cost of recovery.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch if I can answer questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Jessica Koski, State Policy Coordinator, Washington BlueGreen Alliance