



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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July 1, 2020

**NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENT**  
**(by Wednesday, July 15, 2020)**

**NOTICE OF WORKGROUP WORKSHOP**  
**(Wednesday, July 22, 2020, beginning at 9:00 a.m.)**

Re: Response to COVID-19 Pandemic, Docket U-200281

**BACKGROUND**

On March 18, 2020, Governor Inslee issued Proclamation 20-23, which, among other provisions, strongly encouraged all utilities in Washington to take reasonable actions to mitigate the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their customers, including preventing disconnection of services due to non-payment during the term of the statewide emergency declaration, waiving late payments and fees, and using payment plans to fulfill customer outstanding balances.

On April 17, 2020, the Governor issued Proclamation 20-23.2, which prohibits all energy, water, and telecommunications providers from (1) disconnecting residential service due to nonpayment, (2) refusing to reconnect residential customers who were disconnected due to nonpayment, and (3) charging late fees or reconnection fees. The prohibition was set to expire on May 4, 2020, but subsequent proclamations extended that date through July 28, 2020. Proclamation 20-23.4, issued on May 29, 2020, also requires utilities to develop COVID-19 Customer Support Programs, consistent with state guidance from the Governor's office, and that will address payment plan options for residential customers who are in arrears due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On June 16, 2020, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) conducted a virtual special open meeting to receive status updates from regulated utilities and interested persons regarding their general experiences responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to discuss utilities' transition plans related to the Governor's moratorium on disconnections

and late or reconnection fees. The Commission has also received written comments on these issues both before and after the special open meeting.

### WORKSHOP

The Commission has scheduled a workshop for a COVID-19 response workgroup of stakeholders on **July 22, 2020, beginning at 9:00 a.m.** and ending no later than 4:00 p.m. In addition to Commission staff, invited participants include Puget Sound Energy, Avista Corporation, d/b/a Avista Utilities, PacifiCorp, d/b/a Pacific Power & Light Company, Cascade Natural Gas Corporation, Northwest Natural Gas Company, the Public Counsel Unit of the Washington Attorney General's Office, The Energy Project, Front and Centered, Northwest Energy Coalition, Puget Sound Sage, and the Sierra Club. Each participant should have no more than two representatives who intend to speak during the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop is to facilitate development of guidelines for ensuring that customers experiencing economic hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic maintain access to essential services after Proclamation 20-23 expires and the moratorium on disconnections and late fees is no longer in effect. The Commission will circulate an agenda with topics for discussion in advance of the workshop.

Consistent with the Governor's Proclamation 20-25, "Stay Home – Stay Healthy," the workshop will be conducted virtually. To participate by phone, call (360) 407-3810, and enter conference ID 2324594. To participate via Skype, please use the following link:  
<https://lync.wa.gov/utc.wa.gov/meet/aldcalendar/6LH09TZG>.

### WRITTEN COMMENTS

The Commission has previously received comments with suggestions for post-moratorium guidelines, including a stipulation in a proceeding before the Illinois Commerce Commission to address these issues. In addition, the Governor's office is developing guidance on these issues. The Commission welcomes written responses to these suggestions and guidance and additional written comments and proposals by **July 15, 2020**. The Commission anticipates using all of these comments and published guidance to focus the discussion during the workshop.

Written comments should be submitted in electronic form, specifically in searchable .pdf format (Adobe Acrobat or comparable software), via the Commission's web portal at [www.utc.wa.gov/e-filing](http://www.utc.wa.gov/e-filing). If you are unable to submit documents via the portal, you may submit your comments by email to the Commission's Records Center at [records@utc.wa.gov](mailto:records@utc.wa.gov) or by mailing or delivering an electronic copy to the Commission's Records Center on a flash drive, DVD, or compact disc that includes the filed document(s). Comment submissions should include:

- The docket number of this proceeding (Docket U-200281).

- The commenting party's name.
- The title and date of the comment or comments.

The Commission will post on its web site all comments that are provided in electronic format. The web site is located at <http://www.utc.wa.gov/200281>.

If you have questions regarding this workshop, you may contact Administrative Law Judge Gregory Kopta, who will be moderating the workshop, at (360) 664-1355, or by email at [gregory.kopta@utc.wa.gov](mailto:gregory.kopta@utc.wa.gov).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark L. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

MARK L. JOHNSON  
Executive Director and Secretary