



[records@utc.wa.gov](mailto:records@utc.wa.gov)

July 1, 2020

Mark L. Johnson  
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission  
621 Woodland Square Loop SE  
Lacey, WA 98503

Re: Docket # U-200281

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to Docket UE-191023. We are grateful for all the state has done to protect the health and welfare of Washingtonians during this challenging and unprecedented time. We submit this letter urging the UTC to further ensure access to energy and protect workers and families from undue economic harm and risk.

Front and Centered is a coalition of organizations across the state that are rooted in communities of color and with lower incomes. Together we are committed to equity and ensuring climate and environmental justice because our communities are hit first and worse by extraction, pollution, and climate change, exacerbating existing health and economic disparities. Our communities are also disproportionately impacted by this pandemic and the economic downturn. It is for these reasons we are writing the UTC to do all you can to ensure Black, Indigenous, people of color and those with lower- or no incomes can access energy.

The impact of Covid-19 on people all across the state has been historic, not just the rate of infection and death but a record level of unemployment and job loss. For those who still have a job, many face increasing demands of caring for children at home and working remotely. We will soon more hardship as rent payments and mortgage bills come due, along with potential health care costs from testing and illness as we experience a resurgence of the virus. It is upon us as a state to do whatever we can to lessen the economic impact and ensure access to basic necessities including energy.

Utilities are a vital part of daily living, now more than ever. Families are at home more, living, learning, and keeping each other safe. Workers too are at home, relying on energy to keep computers on so they

Received  
Records Management  
07/01/20 13:31  
State Of WASH.  
UTIL. AND TRANSP.  
COMMISSION

can keep earning wages and remain gainfully employed. Undermining access to energy could send more people in an economic tailspin, pushing our state further into economic decline.

We urge the UTC to do everything in its power to avoid creating further economic hardship for people with lower- or no-incomes and ensure reliable, accessible and affordable energy. In particular, we ask the UTC to ensure there are:

- No additional cut offs or fees for those with lower- or no-incomes;
- No disconnections so that families can remain employed, connected, and meet basic living needs;
- No fees for reconnection of services or other fees; and
- Payment plans that allow people to pay what they can when they can.

Thank you for considering our comments. We hope that you will further support and protect the people of our state, especially those struggling the most. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at [deric@frontandcentered.org](mailto:deric@frontandcentered.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deric J. Gruen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deric J. Gruen  
Co-Executive Director  
Programs and Policy