



Office of the Mayor

Satya Rhodes-Conway, Mayor

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July 14, 2020

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 7854
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7854

RE: Extending the Moratorium on Utility Shut-Offs During COVID-19 Pandemic (Docket #5-UI-120)

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to ask you to extend the state moratorium on utility disconnections that you established on March 24, and that is set to expire on July 25.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a significant economic downturn resulting in skyrocketing unemployment throughout Wisconsin. It has been economically devastating for many, and it is not nearly over. New unemployment claims continue to be filed, the supplemental weekly benefit to unemployment benefit of \$600 per week is set to end on July 31, and evictions are rising. Given that we are also seeing a growing number of COVID cases in Dane County and other areas of the state, we continue to believe we have a long road ahead of us to manage both the pandemic itself and the resulting economic damage.

We are in the middle – not at the end -- of a public health and economic crisis. It is not the time to end the programs and policies established to help people weather this storm. For those who have lost their jobs in this crisis, losing their utilities only compounds the difficulties of an incredibly challenging time. It further marginalizes those who are already struggling by making job hunting or online school work difficult. It also increases personal and public health risks during this hot summer. Electricity shut-offs leave people without access to cooling during a heat wave, and many of our traditional emergency cooling centers are currently closed. This can lead to increased heat-related illnesses and deaths. It also increases the risk of spreading COVID-19 as people seek out public places to cool down.

Wisconsin communities are experiencing unprecedented and multiple crises. Maintaining utility services during this crisis is essential to sustaining and protecting the health and welfare of our residents and businesses. It is a critical part of the overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I respectfully

July 14, 2020
Page 2

ask that the PSC extend the moratorium on utility disconnections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Satya", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Satya Rhodes-Conway, Mayor