



Public Utility Commission of Texas

1701 N. Congress, P.O. Box 13326, Austin, TX 78711-3326 Fax 512-936-7003

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Contact: Andrew Barlow

Andrew.Barlow@PUC.Texas.GOV

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION EXTENDS DNP PROTECTIONS FOR CUSTOMERS OF PUC-REGULATED WATER, SEWER AND NON-ERCOT ELECTRIC UTILITIES

Existing ability to recover debt through rate increases mitigates impact on customers

Austin, TX – In today’s open meeting, the Public Utility Commission of Texas continued its efforts to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the low-income customers of Texas utilities by extending to June 13th the suspension of disconnections for non-payment by vertically integrated electric utilities outside of ERCOT (namely Entergy, El Paso Electric, SPS and SWEPCO) and water and sewer utilities regulated by the PUC, superseding the May 15th expiration date originally ordered in the commissioners’ open meeting on April 17, 2020.

“When we originally established the May 15th expiration for these protections, I thought that we would be farther along in terms of reopening our economy, but the appropriately-paced approach Texas is taking makes this change necessary,” said Chairman DeAnn Walker. “As we strive to provide regulatory certainty to the companies under our purview and ease the burden on their low-income customers, it’s prudent to delay the expiration of these disconnection protections until some degree of economic stability emerges.”

The commissioners’ unanimous vote to extend the expiration for the disconnection suspensions for the vertically integrated electric utilities outside of ERCOT and the water and sewer companies regulated by the PUC does not impact the May 15th expiration of the moratorium on late fees for residential customers or the scheduled July 17th expiration for the Electricity Relief Program.

Customers of the utilities affected by today’s order are reminded that the suspension of disconnection does not relieve them of the obligation to pay their utility bills and are encouraged to pay what they can when they can to avoid excessive debt in the future.

“Fortunately, we’ve already established a way for these water utilities and vertically integrated electric utilities outside of ERCOT to recover any resulting bad debt through a rate change,” said Commissioner Shelly Botkin. “Until this pandemic situation improves, we’ll continue to monitor its impact on Texas utility customers and the companies who serve them.”

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About the Public Utility Commission

Our mission is to serve Texans by regulating the state’s electric, telecommunication, and water and sewer utilities, implementing respective legislation, and offering customer assistance in resolving consumer complaints. Since its founding in 1975, the Commission has a long and proud history of service to Texas, protecting customers, fostering competition, and promoting high quality infrastructure. To learn more, please visit <http://www.puc.texas.gov>.