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EXECUTIVE ORDER

Providing Relief to Public Utility Customers affected by COVID-19

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2, of the Colorado Constitution and the relevant portions of the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.*, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order providing relief to public utility customers to mitigate, respond to, and recover from the current economic disruption due to the presence of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Colorado.

I. Background and Purpose

On March 5, 2020, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE) public health laboratory confirmed the first presumptive positive COVID-19 test result in Colorado. Since then, the number of confirmed cases has continued to climb, and there is community spread throughout the State. I verbally declared a disaster emergency on March 10, 2020, and on March 11, 2020, I issued the corresponding Executive Order D 2020 003, as amended by Executive Orders D 2020 018, D 2020 032, D 2020 058, and D 2020 076. On March 25, 2020, I requested that the President of the United States declare a Major Disaster for the State of Colorado, pursuant to the Stafford Act. The President approved that request on March 28, 2020.

My administration, along with other State, local, and federal authorities, has taken a wide array of actions to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, prevent further spread, and protect against overwhelming our health care resources.

The economic impacts of COVID-19 are significant, and threaten to undermine the economic stability of many Coloradans and local businesses. The risk of contamination posed by COVID-19 necessitated closure of multiple businesses. Employers and employees in virtually all sectors of the economy have been hard hit. We must take action to shore up economic security, employment, community cohesion, and community recovery.

While we have seen indications that our efforts to "flatten the curve" are working, transmission of the virus continues to threaten Coloradans' way of life and livelihoods. On April 26, 2020, I issued Executive Order D 2020 044 Safer at Home, as amended and extended by Executive Order D 2020 079. To be Safer at Home, Coloradans impacted financially by COVID-19 must continue to have access to utilities at home. Many Coloradans experienced substantial loss of income as a result of business closures and layoffs, hindering their ability to keep up with their rent or mortgage payments.

This Executive Order temporarily provides relief and State support to public utility customers to mitigate, respond to, and recover from the current economic disruption due to the presence of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Colorado.

II. Utility Directives

A. I direct the PUC to work with all public utilities to waive reconnection fees and suspend accrual of late payment fees for all residential customers and small business consumers.

B. I direct the PUC to work with all public utilities to develop and provide payment assistance programs to aid customers, particularly customers qualified for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, in the payment of their utility bills, related to the impacts of COVID-19. The PUC will report on the development of the payment assistance programs to DORA and the Office of the Governor.

C. I direct the PUC to work with public utilities to provide guidance on prioritizing payment assistance. Further, the PUC shall collect and monitor relevant data from public utilities on the implementation of Statewide measures undertaken in response to this Executive Order and on a weekly basis report these efforts to the Office of the Governor and post them on PUC's website.

D. I direct the Colorado Energy Office to work with the trade associations for propane heating across the State to encourage providers to develop payment plans for customers who cannot afford to refill their propane tanks, and to inform customers about the Low Income Energy Assistance Program.

E. For purposes of this Executive Order, "small business consumers" means a public utility customer whose utility service is classified as a small business user or a small commercial user pursuant to a utility tariff established by the PUC. Those public utilities without a tariff established by the PUC shall establish their own definition of "small business consumers," as necessary for purposes of implementing this Executive Order.

F. For purposes of this Executive Order, "public utility" or "public utilities" means an investor-owned, municipal, or cooperative entity providing electric, gas, or water service within the State of Colorado.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from June 12, 2020, unless extended further by Executive Order.

GIVEN under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Colorado, this twelfth day of June, 2020.

Jared Polis
Governor