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NEWS RELEASE

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PSC Orders Utilities to Halt Disconnections During Coronavirus Emergency

Also temporarily relaxes certain requirements, suspends inspections

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Mar. 16, 2020) – The Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) is ordering all utilities under its jurisdiction to suspend until further notice, and for at least 30 days, all disconnections for non-payment, as well as late payment fees, in order to provide relief for customers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic.

In an order issued today, the PSC stated that disconnections pose a risk of COVID-19 transmission to utility employees and are a waste of utility resources at a time when there is a "pressing need to ensure continuity, and thus adequacy, of service."

The PSC noted that its order does not apply to municipal utilities, over which it has no jurisdiction, but nevertheless urged them to follow suit and suspend non-payment disconnections and late fees.

In addition, the PSC took several other steps to temporarily relieve utilities of certain regulatory obligations and to reduce opportunities for COVID-19 transmission by enabling social distancing. These include:

- Suspending nearly all requirements for filing print copies of documents and allowing all case filings and other documents to be filed electronically. Paper copies will be filed on a delayed basis.
- Allowing utilities to temporarily close their offices or limit business hours.
- Suspending certain reporting requirements to the PSC.
- Suspending on-site inspections by the PSC.
- Closing the PSC building to visitors and either conducting meetings by teleconference or postponing them until the COVID-19 emergency ends.

The PSC emphasized that delaying disconnections in no way relieves customers of the obligation to ultimately pay for utility services. But the PSC said it expects utilities to establish "lenient and flexible payment plans" for customers who fall behind.

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The PSC said that addressing the COVID-19 emergency will take precedence over all other business, unless other matters must be addressed due to statutory requirements. The PSC said it expects to continue its regular functions and discharge its statutory duties.

Any utility that believes that its own rules or those of the PSC preclude it from taking "any action that could relieve the hardship that exists due to COVID-19" should contact the PSC to request relief from those rules. The PSC said it will promptly address such requests, and will leave the case open to deal with issues related to COVID-19 as they arise.

Today's order is available on the PSC website, psc.ky.gov. The case number is 2020-00085.

The PSC is an independent agency attached for administrative purposes to the Energy and Environment Cabinet. It regulates more than 1,100 gas, water, sewer, electric and telecommunication utilities operating in Kentucky.

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QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS REGARDING YOUR UTILITY SERVICE?

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