The State of Maryland

Executive Department

ORDER
OF THE
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND

PROHIBITING TERMINATION OF RESIDENTIAL SERVICES AND LATE FEES

WHEREAS, A state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency was proclaimed on March 5, 2020, to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the state, and the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency continue to exist;

WHEREAS, COVID-19, a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death, is a public health catastrophe and has been confirmed in several Maryland counties;

WHEREAS, To reduce the spread of and exposures to COVID-19, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Maryland Department of Health, consistent with the currently known and available scientific evidence and best practices, recommend social distancing;

WHEREAS, Termination of residential services by utilities and providers may require a representative of the company to personally visit the premises and interact with the occupants;

WHEREAS, The spread of COVID-19 is likely to result in loss of work and loss of income for some residents of Maryland, which may impact their ability to pay for residential services;

WHEREAS, The termination of Marylanders' residential services as a result of COVID-19 would have serious public health, welfare, and safety consequences;

WHEREAS, Maryland utilities and service providers have agreed that, to protect the public health, welfare, and safety, certain residential services should not be terminated, and have taken action to provide additional assistance to their customers during the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency;

WHEREAS, It is necessary to protect the public health, welfare, or safety to suspend the effect of statutes, rules, or regulations regarding termination of residential services, and authorize the use of private property; and

WHEREAS, To reduce the threat to human health caused by COVID-19 in Maryland, protect the health and safety of utility employees and customers, and save lives, it is necessary and reasonable that residential service companies not terminate service to dwellings or residents, or charge fees for late or untimely payments for services to residential dwellings, during the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LAWRENCE J. HOGAN, JR., GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS OF MARYLAND, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO TITLE 14 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE, DO HEREBY ORDER:

I. No electric, gas, sewage disposal, telegraph, telephone, water, or cable television company, or internet service provider, or any company providing a combination of such services (a "Residential Service Company"), shall terminate the service of a customer if the service is used, in whole or in part, in a dwelling unit or residence.

II. A Residential Service Company shall not bill or collect, on an account that serves a dwelling unit or residence, any fee or charge imposed for a late or otherwise untimely payment that becomes due from the date of this Order.

III. This Order remains effective until the termination of the state of emergency and the proclamation of the catastrophic health emergency has been rescinded, but in all events no later than May 1, 2020, except as may be rescinded, superseded, amended, or revised by additional orders.

IV. The effect of any statute, rule, or regulation of an agency of the State or a political subdivision inconsistent with this order is hereby suspended.

ISSUED UNDER MY HAND THIS 16TH DAY OF MARCH, 2020, AND EFFECTIVELY IMMEDIATELY.

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor