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John B. Rhodes, Chair

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PSC Starts Proceeding Aimed at Addressing Impacts of COVID Crisis on Customers and Utilities

Commission Action Follows Governor Cuomo's Directive that Agencies Should Assist Consumers, Industry During COVID Outbreak

Proceeding Will Examine Impacts on Rate-Setting, Rate Design, Low-Income Programs, Collections and Termination of Service, Among Other Issues

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission), in response to the impact of the COVID pandemic on New York's utilities and ratepayers, established a crucial and new proceeding to identify and address the effects on utility and other Commission-regulated services and programs in New York State.

"Since the start of the pandemic and the economic downturn, the Commission has acted to respond to the most pressing COVID-related impacts for customers on a timely basis as these issues have emerged," **said Commission Chair John B. Rhodes.** "With this action today, we continue to enable prompt responses on pressing needs for relief and adjustments, as well as dealing with the full range of the impacts in a comprehensive, thoughtful and thorough manner."

In response to the COVID pandemic, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo declared a State emergency and has called on State and local agencies to do their utmost to protect the public health and welfare of the people of the State. The pandemic is impacting the customers of multiple industries subject to Commission oversight and programs, including electric and gas distribution utilities, private water supplies, renewable and distributive energy, energy efficiency, telecommunications, broadband and cable television. The proceeding will review how customers have been impacted by the pandemic and explore methods of mitigating those impacts. Further, the pandemic is impacting the operations of these critical industries, and the proceeding will focus on the continued provision of safe and reliable service.

Consistent with Governor Cuomo's executive orders, the Commission has undertaken several actions to address the ramifications of COVID to industries and sectors subject to Commission oversight and programs. While these actions have allowed for prompt responses, the Commission recognizes the need to address the ramifications from the ongoing pandemic in a more comprehensive manner as the Commission begins the process of developing and adjusting policies that will guide the entities subject to Commission oversight and their customers through the current crisis.

The new proceeding will address the effects of the COVID pandemic on all entities subject to Commission jurisdiction or permitting authority, including electric, gas and steam distribution utilities, independent power producers, energy service companies, private water supply companies, and telecommunications and cable television companies; utility ratepayers; and Commission-adopted programs, including those related to onshore and offshore renewable energy, distributed energy, energy efficiency and heat pumps. The Commission will also examine the change in electricity use and the unprecedented change in residential and business demand for electricity in light of the work-from-home requirements.

This proceeding will include, but not be limited to, impacts on rate-setting, rate design, utility financial strength, low-income programs, regulatory priorities, collections and termination of service; ensuring the provision of safe and adequate service at just and reasonable rates in recognition of the ramifications from the COVID pandemic; and the extent if any that the Commission's clean energy programs should be maintained or accelerated.

The Commission invites utilities and other entities subject to Commission jurisdiction and programs, ratepayers, and all interested parties to provide comments on issues related to the ramifications of COVID on Commission-adopted tariffs, regulations, policies and programs.

Today's decision may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 20-M-0266 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Commission documents may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.

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