

November 23, 2020

Honorable Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, Chairman  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
P.O. Box 3265  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

Re: 2020 Prepare Now Campaign

Dear Chairman Dutrieuille:

I write in response to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's ("Commission's") 2020 Prepare Now Campaign letter dated October 28, 2020. Metropolitan Edison Company ("Met-Ed"), Pennsylvania Electric Company ("Penelec"), Pennsylvania Power Company ("Penn Power") and West Penn Power Company ("West Penn Power") (collectively, the "Companies") have assiduously supported the Commission's Prepare Now Campaign in years past. The Companies will continue to do so during 2020 by helping customers restore and maintain service; prepare for potentially higher electricity bills this coming winter due to weather-induced increases in usage through the Companies' energy-conservation- and Universal-Service programs; and raise awareness of energy costs, energy conservation measures, and the availability of budget bill and low-income assistance programs. To these ends, the following highlights some of the Companies' initiatives currently available to customers that are willing to commit to a long-term strategy towards addressing their entire unpaid account balances:

#### Initiatives to Restore and Maintain Electric Service

- The Companies are accepting various combinations of customer payments, assistance grants, and payment arrangements in order to address unpaid balances and avoid service terminations or restore service for those customers who are demonstrating good-faith efforts to pay their bills. For example, in many instances, the Companies are accepting a lesser amount than may be required by regulation to restore service; this is one of the ways the Companies continue to work with customers on a case-by-case basis. In addition, pursuant to (and consistent with) the Commission's March 13, 2020 Emergency Order issued in Docket No. M-2020-3019244, during the mandated termination moratorium, the Companies reconnected customers without requiring payment, reconnection fees, or security deposits.
- Eligible low-income customers are being encouraged to enroll (or recertify) in the Pennsylvania Customer Assistance Program ("PCAP"). The successful enrollment or recertification, with customer payments or "assistance grants", or both, where applicable, will enable a customer to avoid service termination or assist with its restoration during the upcoming winter months. And, now that the Equal Payment Plan ("EPP") is an integral part of PCAP, customer bills are levelized, providing customers more control over planning their monthly expenses and budgets. Further, all PCAP recertifications and dismissals have been temporarily suspended as of March 26, 2020.
- Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Companies have focused on helping customers restore service and establish payment agreements to address outstanding balances. To help customers maintain service, the Companies are expanding their customer-communication efforts through the use of telephone calls, letters, public service announcements, and attempted contacts during field visits—all of which are designed to provide customers information to avoid

disruptions of or to restore, or both, service and encourage customers to contact the Companies for information on available assistance.

- The Companies are also working with customers, on a case-by-case basis, who have made good-faith efforts to pay their bills to avoid termination once the COVID-19 moratorium is lifted by allowing more than one payment arrangement in certain situations. When given a payment arrangement, customers will be placed on budget billing, thereby providing an additional opportunity for them to effectively manage their electric bills. Customers with existing arrangements may be asked to make up any missed payments to resume the terms of their previous commitments. Additionally, the Companies' payment arrangement guidelines are designed to be sensitive to the needs of payment-troubled customers falling between 150 and 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (i.e., those who do not qualify for customer assistance programs but still need help). There are also additional protections in place for customers falling at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level, in compliance with the October 13, 2020, Order at Docket No. M-2020-3019244.

#### Initiatives to Provide Universal Service Programs

During the past year, the Companies have applied nearly 89,000 grants, totaling over \$68 million in electric bill assistance, to low-income households through the Companies' portfolio of assistance programs and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program ("LIHEAP") and will continue to do so in accordance with their Commission-approved Universal Service Plans. The various programs comprising the Companies' portfolio include:

- The Dollar Energy Fund (emergency hardship fund);
- The Pennsylvania Customer Assistance Program ("PCAP"); and
- The Pennsylvania LIHEAP (Federally funded Pennsylvania grant program).

At the present time, the Dollar Energy Fund is open and awarding cash grants to eligible low-income customers with termination notices to prevent disconnection of service or to re-enroll them in PCAP, or both.

PCAP enrollments are processed by calling Dollar Energy Fund at 1-888-282-6816. Office hours have been extended for PCAP enrollments. Customers may apply by phone Mon. – Fri. between the hours of 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

#### Initiatives to Promote Electric Energy Conservation

During the October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 Low-Income Usage Reduction Program ("LIURP")/WARM period, the Companies spent approximately \$17.9 million on energy-conservation measures and energy education for over 4,000 homes. During this same period, Act 129 Energy Efficiency and Conservation programs spent approximately \$5.8 million on energy conservation initiatives, benefitting approximately 56,500 participants. A brief description of the Companies' portfolio of programs follows:

- The LIURP/WARM programs provide customer's assistance with the installation of energy-conservation measures and energy education;
- The WARM Extra Measures Program offers expanded conservation items in addition to WARM measures installed in customers' homes already participating in LIURP/WARM;
- The WARM Plus Program is an expansion of the LIURP/WARM Program that serves additional participants;

- The Low-Income Multifamily Program provides energy-savings measures and appliance replacements for customers in multifamily units;
- The Low-Income Behavioral Modification Program provides monthly energy-usage reports and energy-saving tips to low-income customers and promotes other energy-conservation programs;
- The Low-Income Appliance Turn-In Program allows for the pickup and recycling of an older working refrigerator or freezer;
- The Low-Income Appliance Rebate Program provides customer rebates on the purchase of Energy Star Certified Appliances;
- The Low-Income New Homes Program provides incentives to home builders to construct new homes that meet the Energy Star Certification; and
- The Low-Income School Education Program provides energy education and energy-saving kits to school students participating in the Program.

### Initiatives to Promote Customer Awareness

The Companies continue to utilize various methods to educate and make customers aware of available assistance and energy-efficiency programs, including:

- Promoting programs via the Company websites—the Companies’ energy conservation programs are promoted at [www.energysavepa.com](http://www.energysavepa.com) , and their Universal Service Plans at [www.firstenergycorp.com/billassist](http://www.firstenergycorp.com/billassist) . Program brochures (PCAP, Get to Know PCAP, and PCAP Referrals-Application Process) are available on the website in English and Spanish;
- Increasing customer awareness of low-income energy assistance availability via multiple social-media platforms, outbound call campaigns, email campaigns, bill inserts, corporate websites, and press releases;
- Providing the Companies’ Universal Service Program and Very Important Program (“VIP”) bill inserts, which outline customer programs (including those to provide help during times of need), in monthly customer bills;
- Utilizing a bill insert in October to promote LIHEAP. In November, a second bill insert reminded customers of the availability of the Dollar Energy Fund—both for those customers in need and those interested in contributing to this fund;
- Sponsoring the annual 3WS i-Heart Radio Request-a-Thon, KDKA Dollar Energy Fund WARM-a-Thon, and the Dollar Energy Fund Cool Down for Warmth fundraisers. Sponsorship will include television commercials, radio interviews, and program advertisements in January and February that promote the Companies’ low-income energy conservation programs and provide customers energy-saving tips;
- Introducing an online application for PCAP via [www.dollarenergy.org/myapp](http://www.dollarenergy.org/myapp);
- Streamlining PCAP application requirements and suspending the recertification requirements due to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic;
- Streamlining the process for customers to apply for WARM at the same time they apply for PCAP by taking a verbal agreement from them over the telephone to participate in the WARM Program.

This eliminates the need for application mailings between the Company and the customer, providing improved efficiency in service and immediate commitment from the customer;

- Referring low-income customers to PCAP as well as promoting LIHEAP cash and crisis grants and Dollar Energy Fund emergency hardship grants;
- Promoting the Home Energy Analyzer on the Companies' websites, which can educate customers about energy-efficiency opportunities in the home and be utilized at the customer's convenience;
- Promoting the Companies' Act 129 and LIURP/WARM programs through bill inserts, direct mail campaigns (including letters and postcards, radio, television, newspaper, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and [www.energysavepa.com](http://www.energysavepa.com)). An advertising firm was retained by the Companies to lead a marketing campaign and develop strategies to identify eligible low-income customers who have not previously applied for LIURP/WARM;
- Promoting the use of the [www.energysavepa.com](http://www.energysavepa.com) website for customers to use the electronic application featured on the site to enroll in the program;
- Requiring LIURP/WARM Program contractors to leave program applications at the homes of customers at the time of the program audit for customers to share with neighbors, friends, and family; and
- Cross marketing of LIURP/WARM Program by providing information on this program in the Act 129 residential Home Energy Reports and School Education Program Energy Efficiency Kits.

The Companies appreciate the opportunity to share these initiatives and look forward to continuing to work with the Commission on these important efforts. We are hopeful that the Prepare Now Campaign will assist customers by raising their awareness of energy costs, energy conservation measures, and the availability of budget bill and low-income assistance programs.

Please call me if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Scott Wyman  
President, PA Operations

- c: The Honorable David W. Sweet, Vice Chairman  
The Honorable John F. Coleman, Jr., Commissioner  
The Honorable Ralph V. Yanora, Commissioner  
Ms. Sasha Oberheim, Bureau of Consumer Services  
Ms. Alexis Bechtel, Director, Bureau of Consumer Services