



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

August 18, 2020

Ms. Gladys Brown Dutrieuille
Chairman, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Emergency Order at Docket Number M-2020-3019244

Dear Chairman Dutrieuille:

I write to express my appreciation for your leadership in protecting Pennsylvania utility customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to respond to your letter of August 10th requesting comment regarding the existing utility termination moratorium and customer protections for at-risk customers. In particular, I write to urge that the moratorium be continued, unless, and only unless, strong consumer protections remain in place to protect low-income customers and those who have lost significant income as a result of the pandemic.

With the expiration of federal unemployment compensation and other assistance, vital resources that many Pennsylvanians depended on to pay their bills are no longer available. Just last week, I wrote to Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation to urge them to continue to work with House and Senate leadership to extend the \$600 a week Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program to support those who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, the likelihood of passage is uncertain, leaving income-insecure Pennsylvanians at risk during this time of economic disruption.

My office has received correspondence in recent days from low-income advocates, and organizations advocating for older Pennsylvanians including AARP, highlighting the significant negative impacts that lifting the moratorium prematurely would have on the communities they represent.

Given the many uncertainties, I believe that it would be inappropriate to lift the moratorium for vulnerable customers and those who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Should the Commission choose to move forward, I urge that provisions be retained to ensure that utilities not terminate residential customers experiencing at least a 30% reduction in annual income related to COVID-19, or customers at or below 300% of the federal poverty line, so long as the customer can demonstrate that they have taken steps to apply for assistance programs for which they qualify.

I believe that these protections are the minimum that must be done to protect Pennsylvania residents, but also encourage you to consider directing extension of payment plans, waiver of connection and late payment charges, and other mechanisms to protect customers affected by the pandemic. I appreciate your leadership at the Commission and your consideration of the points raised above. Should you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Wolf".

TOM WOLF
Governor