

PUC Prohibits Residential Utility Terminations, Consistent with Governor's Proclamation of Disaster Emergency

March 13, 2020

HARRISBURG - Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) Chairman Gladys Brown Dutrieuille signed an **emergency order** prohibiting electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, telecommunication and steam utility terminations. The moratorium will remain in place for as long as the Proclamation of Disaster, issued by Gov. Tom Wolf on March 6 related to the Coronavirus, is in effect.

Under the unique circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, establishing a termination moratorium for utility services under the PUC's jurisdiction is consistent with the Governor's Proclamation of Disaster Emergency and the requirements of the Public Utility Code. Under the order, terminations would be permitted in the event of a safety emergency.

"I believe that issuance of an emergency order is appropriate under the unique circumstances," said the emergency order signed by Chairman Dutrieuille. "It is beyond argument that the provision of public utility service is necessary for the safety of the public. This is especially the case under the current challenges that resulted in the Proclamation of a pandemic emergency."

Pursuant to the Commission's regulations governing emergency relief, an emergency order will be issued only when there exists a clear and present danger to life or property or when the relief requested is uncontested and action is required prior to the next scheduled public meeting.

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission balances the needs of consumers and utilities; ensures safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protects the public interest; educates consumers to make independent and informed utility choices; furthers economic development; and fosters new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner.

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