



**State of Vermont
Public Utility Commission**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**VERMONT PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION BLOCKS DISCONNECTION OF
UTILITY SERVICE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS STATE OF EMERGENCY**

Montpelier, VT, March 18, 2020 – Today the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) directed the state’s regulated utilities to stop any disconnection of residential utility service due to nonpayment of electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications bills. This moratorium on involuntary utility disconnections will last until at least April 30, 2020.

The Commission issued the order to ensure that all Vermonters are protected from utility disconnections during the state of emergency caused by the pandemic spread of the coronavirus known as COVID-19. The Governor’s Executive Order No. 01-20, issued on March 13, 2020, urged Vermonters to take steps to control the spread of COVID-19, including limiting travel and public gatherings. Given that many Vermonters will experience a loss of income as a result of these restrictions and will spend considerable time at home for the foreseeable future, the Commission decided it was imperative to protect the public good by halting utility disconnections that might place Vermonters at risk.

The Commission’s order also noted that many regulated utilities (including Green Mountain Power, Vermont Gas Systems, Burlington Electric Department, the Vermont Electric Cooperative, and others) had already informed the Commission and the Vermont Department of Public Service (the “Department”) that they are temporarily ceasing disconnections at this time. Other companies have followed suit, such as Comcast Cable Company and AT&T. The Commission appreciates the efforts of the utilities and the Department to meet the challenge posed by this state of emergency.

The proceeding was opened in response to a March 16 petition from Vermont Legal Aid “on behalf of the low-income, disabled, and elderly residents of the state.” For more information about the moratorium, please contact: Kyle Landis-Marinello, General Counsel, kyle.landis-marinello@vermont.gov. The March 18, 2020, order can be found by searching for Case No. 20-0703-PET on ePUC, the PUC’s online document-management system (<https://epuc.vermont.gov/>).