

Filed VIA ePUC

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Docket No. 20-0703-PET

Vermont Legal Aid Request for Moratorium on)
Utility and Telecommunications Shutoffs During)
State of Emergency)

REQUEST TO REINSTATE THE TEMPORARY MORATORIUM

Petitioner Vermont Legal Aid, Inc. respectfully requests the reinstatement of the temporary halt of involuntary utility disconnections (the moratorium) during the state of emergency in Vermont because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission granted Vermont Legal Aid’s original request for a disconnection moratorium in its order dated March 18, 2020. Subsequently, the Commission extended the moratorium, on several occasions, until October 15, 2020. Pursuant to its order entered October 8, 2020, the Commission announced that it would lift the moratorium, effective October 15, 2020, based on three important factors: 1) the utilities intended to work with customers to avoid disconnections; in fact, some utilities, such as Green Mountain Power and Vermont Gas Systems, pledged not to disconnect any customers during the upcoming winter; 2) ending the moratorium would help those customers who had fallen behind on their utility bills by encouraging those customers to apply for time-limited assistance from the Department of Public Service’s Vermont COVID-19 Arrearage Assistance Program (VCAAP) and to engage with their utilities to address their outstanding balances; and 3) the Commission ordered additional specific consumer protections to further shield customers from utility disconnections. See *Order Ending the Temporary Disconnection Moratorium and Ordering Protections for Utility Customers Facing Economic Hardships* at 11-13 (Oct. 8, 2020).