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December 15, 2020

Ms. Judith Whitney, Clerk
Vermont Public Utility Commission
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2701

Re: Case No. 20-0703-PET Vermont Legal Aid Request for Moratorium on Utility and Telecommunications Shutoffs During the State of Emergency

Dear Ms. Whitney:

The Town of Stowe Electric Department (“Stowe”) offers the following response to the Vermont Public Utility Commission’s (“Commission”) October 8th, 2020 Order.

As a public power utility owned by its ratepayers, Stowe is committed to supporting its customers during these difficult times. Stowe continues to communicate with all ratepayers with past due utility bills and provide them with information on how to access financial assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stowe has experienced an increase in customer engagement since the Commission lifted the moratorium on utility disconnections, which has allowed Stowe the opportunity to discuss payment arrangements for customers with arrearages.

Stowe now offers the following responses to the three (3) questions presented by the Commission in its October 8th, 2020 Order:

(1) How lifting the moratorium has affected their disconnection numbers

Stowe has not pursued any customer disconnections during the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor's State of Emergency Order. Stowe employees have focused on contacting and speaking with its customers with utility arrearages during the COVID-19 pandemic. After the Commission lifted the moratorium on disconnections, Stowe increased its focus on communicating with its customers about the moratorium and the Vermont COVID-19 Arrearage Assistance Program ("VCAAP"). Stowe has experienced an increase in customer engagement in recent months and appreciates the effort made by the Department of Public Service ("Department") to disseminate information to Vermonters about applying for VCAAP funds.

(2) How many of their customers have made use of VCAAP funding

As of the date of this filing, Stowe received and reviewed 98 applications for VCAAP funds. Stowe continues to encourage customers to apply to the VCAAP program until the deadline set to submit applications. As of the date of this filing, Stowe does not have any outstanding applications that have not been reviewed and verified by Stowe staff.

(3) What percentage of Stowe customers who have arrearages are actively participating in, or seeking to participate in, discussions about repayment plans

Stowe staff remained in contact with our customers since the COVID-19 began to impact our lives and financial security. Stowe staff continues to promote repayment plans, explain the arrearages program, direct customers to financial assistance, and encourage customers to submit VCAAP applications.

