

May 20, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

***Re: Urgent Action Needed to Extend Mandatory Moratorium on Utility Terminations***

Dear Governor Wolf,

We, the undersigned agencies, organizations, and associations, write with great urgency. June 4 is just two weeks away, and with it will come the expiration of your March 6, 2020 Proclamation of Disaster Emergency. As you are undoubtedly aware, the current moratorium on utility terminations for regulated utilities enacted by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission is dependent on the effectiveness of this Emergency Proclamation – and will expire on June 4 without further action.<sup>1</sup>

Even if action were taken to extend the current Emergency Proclamation, thereby extending the PUC's Emergency Order, Pennsylvania's *unregulated* utility customers will remain unprotected from termination – including those served by Pennsylvania's 1200 municipal water and wastewater utilities and rural electric cooperatives that provide electricity to many of Pennsylvania's rural communities. With pressure on these unregulated entities to improve revenue, we are concerned that the current voluntary moratoria initiated by these agencies may soon be lifted on an ad hoc, individual basis.

On May 7, 2020, you issued an Executive Order halting evictions and foreclosures in Pennsylvania until at least July 10, 2020, to protect vulnerable Pennsylvanians from being removed from their homes during the pandemic. But without additional action to also extend and expand the current moratorium on utility terminations, many Pennsylvanians will nevertheless face housing destabilization that results from the loss of utility services. **Thus, we urge you to issue an Executive Order to halt utility terminations statewide through at least July 10, 2020, to prevent the loss of critical utility services to Pennsylvania families.** Issuing a stand-alone, statewide Executive Order that applies to both regulated and unregulated Pennsylvania utilities, aligned with the timeline for eviction and foreclosure protections in your May 7 Executive Order, will help provide clarity and certainty to Pennsylvanians in a time of great instability and uncertainty.

**Without immediate and decisive action to extend the termination moratorium, tens of thousands of vulnerable Pennsylvania households may face imminent loss of water, wastewater, electricity, and natural gas service to their home.** Uninterrupted utility service is critical to help families shelter in place, and to prevent further spread of the virus. Indeed, without

these services, a family cannot wash their hands, sanitize surfaces, or cook food in their homes – all of which are critical to compliance with CDC guidelines and to the continued safety of Pennsylvanians.

Failure to act now to protect economically vulnerable households from the imminent loss of utility service through the current emergency will exacerbate the undeniably disparate impact that the virus has had on low income and minority communities, who are less able to practice safe social distancing at work and at home.<sup>ii</sup>

We are grateful for your clear and decisive leadership through these difficult times, and urge you to take swift and decisive action to ensure that Pennsylvania families remain connected to vital utility services throughout the ongoing crisis.

Respectfully,



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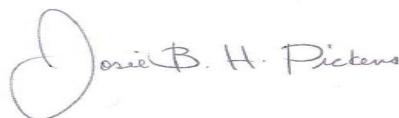
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<sup>i</sup> See Pa. PUC, Public Utility Service Termination Moratorium, Proclamation of Disaster Emergency – COVID-19, Docket No. M-2020-3019244 (issued March 13, 2020).

<sup>ii</sup> See Stephanie Deluca et al., Johns Hopkins Univ. of Medicine, The Unequal Cost of Social Distancing, <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/from-our-experts/the-unequal-cost-of-social-distancing>.