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For Immediate Release

Maryland PSC to Examine COVID-19 Impacts on Utilities and Customers

(BALTIMORE, MD-July 8, 2020) – The Maryland Public Service Commission will hold a public conference over the course of two days to gauge the impact that COVID-19 has had on Maryland utility operations, consumer protections, service reliability and financial health. On March 16, 2020, Governor Larry Hogan issued an Executive Order prohibiting the termination of residential utility services and the imposition of late fees during the COVID-19 state of emergency. This prohibition is currently set to expire on August 1, 2020.

At the conference to be held August 27 and 28, 2020 beginning at 10:00 am each day, the Commission will hear from electric and gas utilities in the state on their responses to a series of questions posed by the Commission in its hearing [notice](#). The questions seek to probe the impacts that stay-at-home orders and the prohibition on shutoffs have had on energy usage, utility operations, reliability, and revenue. Of particular interest to the Commission are the policies and procedures the utilities have developed to handle increasing numbers of customers who are unable to pay utility bills and who may face disconnection of service when the moratorium is lifted.

Also to be examined are impacts on utility energy efficiency programs, pilot programs and other initiatives that provide benefits to customers. The Commission will also seek input on regulatory actions it should consider to mitigate and continue monitoring the impacts of COVID-19 on Maryland utilities and ratepayers.

The Commission previously authorized Maryland utilities to track incremental costs, related to COVID-19, to serve customers during this period. The utilities were also directed to include any assistance or benefit received in connection with COVID-19 that may offset extra costs. In a future proceeding, the Commission will consider whether utilities can recover those additional costs.

The Commission has directed Maryland electric and gas utilities to file responses to its questions by August 11, 2020. Based on the utilities' responses, interested parties may file comments by August 21, 2020.

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About the Public Service Commission:

The Maryland Public Service Commission regulates electric and gas utilities and suppliers, telephone companies (land lines), certain water and sewer companies, passenger motor vehicle carriers for hire (sedans, limousines, buses, Uber, Lyft), taxicab companies (in Baltimore City and County, Charles County, Cumberland and Hagerstown) and bay pilot rates.

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