



STATE OF ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

527 East Capitol Avenue
Springfield, Illinois 62701

160 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

November 5, 2020

VIA E-Mail

To: Regulatory Representatives of Telecommunications Companies

Re: Termination of Service during Public Health Emergency

Over the past eight months, our state's residents have faced incredible financial challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of the pandemic have permeated every city and community in Illinois and have left our most vulnerable residents struggling to pay their utility bills as we approach the winter months. I write today to urge you to respond to this public health emergency by ceasing residential disconnections through March 31, 2021 for individuals who are low income or self-certify a financial or COVID-19 related hardship.

Earlier this year, the Illinois Commerce Commission ("Commission") approved two stipulated agreements which provided historic consumer protections to Illinois' utility customers. The stipulated agreements extended a moratorium on disconnections and suspension of late payment fees or penalties until Illinois entered Phase 4 of Governor Pritzker's Restore Illinois plan on June 26, 2020 and for an additional 30 days beyond that for most customers. To their credit, several utility companies agreed to voluntarily extend the moratorium on disconnections through mid to late September; and most recently, many of the same companies voluntarily extended the moratorium on disconnections through March 31, 2021 for individuals who are low income or otherwise self-certify financial or COVID-19 related hardship.

In the same vein, many of you initially responded to the public health emergency by implementing similar procedures and temporary disconnection moratoriums to help mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic. While your company's initial efforts are laudable, the pandemic has continued to detrimentally impact our communities. As of today, the Illinois Department of Public Health reports over 447,400 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 10,030 COVID-19 deaths. Furthermore, Illinois' current unemployment rate stands at 9.8%, more than double its rate in March 2020 (4.2%). In reviewing the data, it's clear that continuing disconnections during this public health emergency would disproportionately harm the individuals who need help the most.

I acknowledge that the Commission may have little or no statutory authority over your company. Nonetheless, I am asking for your help once again to show that you are all-in for Illinois by implementing a disconnection moratorium through March 31, 2021 for individuals who are low income or self-certify a financial or COVID-19 related hardship. We must continue to take proactive action to support the people of Illinois through this economic and health crisis.

Should you have questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Thank you.

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