

Hardwick Electric Department

PO Box 516

Hardwick, Vermont 05843

(802) 472-5201

4/5/21

Dear Senator Kitchel:

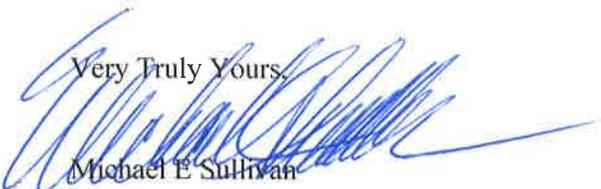
I am reaching out to raise your awareness about the Public Utility Commission issuing an order (attached) to extend the moratorium on utility service disconnections until the end of May. The number of customers falling behind on utility bills due to the COVID-19 pandemic keeps growing. In addition to recognizing the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, the PUC rationalizes that maintaining the moratorium for another short period of time will allow the opportunity to see how federal financial assistance is allocated.

The PUC also notes that additional funding will be critical to helping many Vermonters pay off past due utility bills. To date, federal funding has specifically been targeted to low-income renters, leaving many Vermont home and business owners without assistance. The extension of the moratorium will help such utility customers, but only temporarily.

On behalf of these Vermonters who are also our customers, I am advocating that federal funding be allocated to assist with COVID-19 related utility arrearages. The Hardwick Electric Department (HED) serves 4,630 accounts, 14.5% of which are currently over 60 days past due on their HED bills. Since arrearage assistance funding expired late last year, our arrearages dollars have increased to a significant \$137,316. As a not for profit "at cost" municipal public utility, unpaid bills totaling this much money will have significant negative impacts for HED and the rest of our ratepayers.

I appreciate if you can work to keep this on the consideration list in the Senate. I also appreciate anything you can do to procure the necessary support needed by so many of our customers and customers across other utilities. Please let me know if I can help with any additional information or follow up.

Very Truly Yours,


Michael E Sullivan
General Manager

Cc; file