



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

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Attorney General

October 4, 2019

Ms. Luly Massaro, Clerk
Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Blvd
Warwick, RI 02888

Re: Docket No. 1725

Dear Ms. Massaro,

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (“Division”) writes to provide the Public Utilities Commission (“PUC”) with its comments regarding the September 12, 2019 letter received by the PUC from the George Wiley Center (the “Center”) requesting that the PUC institute an “emergency regulation” allowing gas and electric utility consumers to continue to maintain service, or have service restored after termination, based on reduced down payment and repayment conditions effective now through the 2019 calendar year.

The Division recommends that the PUC implement the same terms and conditions as it did last year in In Re: Regulations Governing Termination of Residential, Electric, Gas and Water Utility Service, Docket No. 1725, by Order No. 23312 (November 1, 2019). By that Order, all residential Standard and Protected customers were permitted to re-establish utility service or prevent termination provided that the customer: (i) make down-payments of 10% (at an amount less than what is required by the PUC’s Rules and Regulations Governing the Termination of Residential Electric, Gas, and Water Utility Service), with balance repayment over specified time-periods spanning between 18 and 36 months, (ii) did not participate in the plan in the prior year or who possess a balance due on his or her account that is the same or less than the customer possessed upon enrollment in the plan in the prior year, and (iii) pay their current bills within the time-period allowed by National Grid. The Division believes that implementation of these payment plan provisions, with conditions, achieves a balance between the needs of our most vulnerable populations during the harsh winter climate months while also maintaining a level of control over the continued growth of large arrearages.

Further, the Division has reviewed Pascoag Utility District's ("Pascoag") comments submitted on September 23, 2019. Pascoag disagrees with the need for implementation of the Center's request but seeks in the alternative "to be relieved or exempted from such requirement." For the reasons cited by Pascoag in its letter, the Division does not object to Pascoag's requested exemption.

Respectfully submitted,

Division of Public Utilities and Carriers



Christy Hetherington
Special Assistant Attorney General