



ATTN: Governor Gary Herbert

Prevent utility shut-offs that put Utahns at risk

Throughout the country, states, cities, utility commissions, and utilities are demonstrating leadership and compassion by keeping customers' lights, gas, phone, internet, and water on during the coronavirus emergency. Here in Utah, utilities such as Rocky Mountain Power and Dominion Energy have implemented voluntary suspensions on disconnections. However, despite the commitments not to shut off essential services to customers, these same local utilities have already started reaching out to ratepayers for balances owed as Utah's economy begins to open up and the public health threat level switches to yellow.

This move to collect balances owed during a global pandemic and a global economic crisis shows that these utilities are prioritizing profit over customer welfare. It shows us, the ratepayers, that they continue to place more importance on economic value than human value. It is a betrayal especially to many low-income customers and small business owners, who may not be able to pay their accrued balances. This slow opening of the economy has not eased the economic burden of lost income and jobs due to

COVID-19, especially for those whose unemployment assistance has not been delivered due to an incredibly overwhelmed system.

COVID-19 has hit Utah very hard, and Utah's most vulnerable (e.g. Utah's Low Income community members, Utahns of Color, Utahns of Different Abilities, mature Utahns, etc.) are the most likely to suffer the impacts of the recession that is likely to follow. These communities already pay the highest proportion of their incomes on energy and are the most vulnerable to disconnections. More than ever, Utahns are struggling to survive, and as fellow Utahns, we should be supporting each other through these unprecedented times.

While we appreciate the temporary suspension of energy shut-offs and steps toward expanding bill assistance and forgiveness programs by local utilities such as Rocky Mountain Power and Dominion Energy, it is time to consider a complete dismissal of all utility bills at least during this global pandemic that continues to threaten the lives of Utahns both medically and financially.

Governor Gary Herbert, we call on you to provide compassionate short-term relief to rate-paying Utahn's to prevent accrument of overwhelming and outstanding debt. We also urge you to ensure long-term relief by supporting investments in energy efficiency and evaluating potential structural changes that leave no Utahn behind. We look forward to engaging in that process with you in the future.

Thank you for recognizing this very important issue and for taking the time to consider these proposals. It's the right thing to do! It's the Utah thing to do!

Signed by the following organizations:

Children's Service Society

HEAL Utah

Utah Pacific Islander Civic Engagement Coalition

LULAC Council 44016

OCA Asian Pacific Islander American Advocates Utah

Casa Quetzalcoatl
Joel Organista

OCA Utah Chapter, University of Utah

Neighborhood House

Manava Circle

National Pacific Islander Covid-19 Response Team

Utah Pacific Islander Health Coalition

Granite School District

Umoja Generation

Pacific Islanders Health Coalition

National Tongan American Society

Utah Micronesia Coalition

**Pacific Islander Center of Primary Care
Excellence**

Sierra Club

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Matthew Weinstein, Salt Lake City
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Karen Gee, Bountiful
Heather Buchanan, Washington Terrace
Diane Montes, Bullfrog
Robert Gebert, Heber City
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