



## RESIDENTIAL UTILITY CONSUMER OFFICE

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Douglas A. Ducey  
Governor

Jorge ("Jordy") Fuentes  
Director

August 20, 2019

Robert "Bob" Burns, Chairman  
Boyd Dunn  
Sandra Kennedy  
Justin Olson  
Lea Marquez Peterson

Re: Investigation and Comprehensive review of the Commission's Disconnection rules and the Disconnection Policies of Public Service Corporations, Docket No. E-00000A-19-0128

Dear Commissioners,

I wanted to take a moment and update you on some important work that has been going on, in response to concerns surrounding the recent utility disconnects. After the emergency rules were put into place, RUCO invited a number of the interested parties to participate in a roundtable discussion on the topic.

The goal of the discussion was to find solutions to help ratepayers with their bills and avoid any long-term financial hardship for themselves and other ratepayers. Invitations were sent to a number of community and statewide organizations including Wildfire, Arizona PIRG Education Fund, St. Vincent de Paul, Chicanos Por La Causa, AARP, Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, and Commission Staff. In addition, we invited APS, TEP/UNSE, SRP, and the Coops to participate. I am pleased that most invited parties have participated.<sup>1</sup>

I am especially pleased with the progress and collaboration that has occurred. To date we have held three different discussions on July 16<sup>th</sup>, July 25<sup>th</sup>, and August 5<sup>th</sup>. The discussions have primarily centered on the topics of 1) customer education including available resources to help ratepayers pay bills, 2) the collection of data to understand the impact of the summer disconnection moratorium, and 3) the implications of the emergency rules come October 15<sup>th</sup>.

There has been robust discussion on these topics. APS and TEP/UNSE provided the group with detailed processes and communication strategies for reaching ratepayers who are having problems paying their

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Commission Staff and SRP. Staff indicated that, at this time, they did not have Staff resources available to participate in these meetings, however they are interested in our outcomes and are performing a separate review.

bills. The group has made substantive recommendations to improve these communication strategies, many of which were adopted.

The group continues to work to develop a set of metrics that can be provided to the Commission to track the impact of the summer moratorium. These metrics have been fairly difficult to develop, because of the difficulty in aggregating the data. However, a somewhat common set of reporting metrics has been settled on and regular updates should be forthcoming.

Lastly, the group discussed what the process might look like at the conclusion of the moratorium. There is some urgency to this issue, as the utilities need to program their billing systems to comply with new rules. The discussion primarily centered on the choices contained in the rule and the mechanics to either allow the ratepayer to pay the balance in full or to place the ratepayer on a payment plan for four months or longer. This issue is an ongoing issue and we will be addressing it further in the coming weeks.

I am happy to report that to date, all who have participated have expressed their appreciation for the discussion and recognize that there is still more work left to be done. The group remains committed to helping protect ratepayers and helping the utilities find solutions within the Commission Rules to mitigate the effects of utility disconnects on ratepayers.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jordy Fuentes".

Jordy Fuentes

Director  
Arizona's Residential Utility Consumer Office

CC: Docket Control