

SECRETARY'S RECORD, PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Application No. PI-231

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- c. The Commission requests that the utility companies remain in contact with the Commission, and continue to provide up-to-date information regarding the status of customer accounts in arrears and the impact of COVID-19 on natural gas utilities and customers in Nebraska.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the findings and actions of the Commission described above be, and hereby are, adopted.

IT IS FINALLY ORDERED that this docket shall remain open until further order of the Commission.

ENTERED AND MADE EFFECTIVE at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 28th day of July, 2020.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:






Chair

ATTEST:


Executive Director

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D I S S E N T

By Commissioner Rhoades:

It is not necessary or in the public interest to lift the moratorium on utility shut offs at this time. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant harm to the physical and economic health of many Nebraskans. Given the crisis has not passed, and transmission of the virus is accelerating in many Nebraska counties, it would be inappropriate to lift the moratorium at this time. While there are some customers who have been unable to pay as a result of COVID-19, it is less than 5% of utility customers according to data submitted to the Commission.

Utilities provide necessary services. As a result, they have not suffered as severely as other industries in this difficult economy. Utilities are eligible for cost recovery for any losses they may experience through the rate making process. That is to say, a utility is likely to recover the full cost, or most of the cost, associated with the pandemic, even if the small portion of customers currently unable to pay are never able to pay. A utility, more than any other industry, will be in a position to rebound after the crisis has passed.

Meanwhile, those individuals who have contracted the virus or lost their job due to the crisis are struggling to keep a roof over their heads, food on the table, and to seek medical care if they become ill.

In my view, it is callous, unethical, and immoral to lift the COVID-19 utility shut off moratorium at this time. Accordingly, I dissent.


Commissioner Crystal Rhoades