

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE April 11, 2025 Contact: Meghan Sovey-Lashua, 608-266-9600 meghan.sovey1@wisconsin.gov

PSC, DOA Encourage Customers to Seek Assistance before Moratorium on Utility Disconnections Ends

Statewide Moratorium to end April 15, 2025

MADISON – The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) and the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) encourage electric and natural gas utility customers with outstanding bills to make payment arrangements with their provider or apply for financial assistance before the moratorium on utility disconnections ends.

The annual winter moratorium from November 1st to April 15th prohibits all utility providers from disconnecting residential heating services for nonpayment. Customers who are behind on their bills may be at risk of disconnection if payment arrangements are not established by April 15, 2025.

"As the winter moratorium on utility disconnections comes to an end, support remains available for Wisconsin families needing assistance," said PSC Chairperson Summer Strand. "Customers should first contact their utility provider to make a payment plan by April 15th. If customers cannot reach an agreement with their utility, the PSC's Consumer Affairs team is available to assist with payment plan negotiation."

Customers having difficulty paying their energy bills may be eligible for DOA's Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). WHEAP is part of the state's comprehensive Home Energy Plus program, which provides assistance to low-income households for emergency energy needs, emergency furnace repairs, conservation services, and weatherization.

Last fiscal year, approximately 190,000 Wisconsin households received nearly \$127 million to assist with monthly utility expenses. So far this fiscal year, nearly 155,000 households have received \$89 million, and WHEAP assistance remains available.

"WHEAP is a critical program that has helped thousands of eligible Wisconsin families keep their heat and lights on," said DOA Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld. "We don't yet know what the impact of federal cuts for these critical programs will look like, but in the meantime crisis assistance is still available for Wisconsin residents. We will continue to do all we can at the state level in partnership with the Public Service Commission and others to ensure that disconnection is the last resort for any household behind on utility bills."

To learn more about financial assistance through WHEAP or to apply, customers can visit energybenefit.wi.gov or call the statewide customer care center at 1-800-506-5596.

To avoid disconnection, customers who have fallen behind on payments are encouraged to contact their utility to set up a payment plan. Listed below is the contact information for the largest utilities in Wisconsin:

- Alliant Energy; 1-800-255-4268
- Madison Gas & Electric; 1-800-245-1125
- Superior Water, Light & Power; 1-800-227-7957
- We Energies; 1-800-842-4565
- Wisconsin Public Service Corporation; 1-800-450-7260
- Xcel Energy; 1-800-895-4999

Utilities are required to offer Deferred Payment Agreements (DPA) to residential customers who cannot pay an outstanding bill in full. Municipal utilities are not required to offer DPAs to tenants, but many still do so. If customers cannot reach a payment agreement with their utility, they may contact the PSC by calling 1-800-225-7729, or by <u>filing a complaint on the PSC</u> website.

For more information about utility disconnections and collections, see the <u>Utility Customer Bill</u> of <u>Rights</u>.

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