

March 19, 2020

*****CONSUMER ALERT*****

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO CONTACT HIS OFFICE ABOUT UTILITY SERVICE SHUTOFFS DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Raoul Also Urges Municipal and Other Providers of Utility Services to Cease Disconnections

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul is encouraging consumers to contact the Attorney General's office if they experience utility disconnections or disrupted service. An emergency order issued March 18 by the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) mandates all public utilities to suspend disconnections from service until at least May 1, or until the state of emergency is lifted. Additionally, the order dictates that utilities must suspend late fees, and adopt flexible credit and collections practices.

"It is important that Illinois residents follow guidance issued by public health authorities in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which may mean staying home – potentially for extended periods of time. Being shut off from utility service is the last thing people should worry about as they work remotely, care for vulnerable populations, or self-quarantine," Attorney General Kwame Raoul said. "I applaud the ICC for taking swift action in imposing a moratorium on the public utilities under its jurisdiction, and I strongly urge the municipally-owned utilities and cooperatives to provide the same disconnection and debt collection relief to their customers to ensure that all Illinois residents continue to receive uninterrupted essential services."

The ICC order applies to all Illinois electric gas, water, and sewage utilities services so that Illinois residents maintain connection to essential utility services. The ICC's emergency order comes after Raoul and Gov. JB Pritzker requested the ICC last Friday initiate an emergency proceeding to place a moratorium on shutoffs for all utility companies across Illinois. Raoul and Pritzker also urged the ICC to require utility companies to modify their debt collection practices after the emergency status ends to ensure consumers stay connected to vital utilities services as they recover from the financial impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The ICC's emergency order applies to public utility companies across Illinois, but does not apply to municipally-owned utilities and cooperatives that provide utility service because those entities are not subject to the ICC's regulatory authority. To that end, Raoul urges municipal utilities and cooperatives to follow the ICC's request to cease disconnections; suspend the imposition of late fees; and adopt flexible payment plans for consumers whose income and expenses are effected by the COVID-19 crisis.

Raoul is also urging consumers to be aware that the ICC issued separate emergency orders on March 18, to prohibit in-person solicitations by alternative retail electric and gas suppliers. Raoul has previously taken action against companies that fraudulently and aggressively market electric and gas services to consumers. Raoul applauds the ICC for taking this important public health and consumer protection action.

Raoul encourages Illinoisans who experience utility disconnections, receive disconnection notices, or encounter door-to-door energy supplier marketers to [file complaints on his website](#).