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Department of Commerce Division of Public Utilities

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Action Request Response

To: Public Service Commission of Utah

From: Utah Division of Public Utilities

Chris Parker, Director

Artie Powell, Manager

Brenda Salter, Utility Technical Consultant Supervisor

Jeff Einfeldt, Utility Technical Consultant

Joanna Matyjasik, Utility Analyst

Date: April 23, 2020

Re: **Docket No. 20-999-01**, Disconnection Policy Investigation Regarding Electric Utility Services, 2020.

Recommendation (No Action Required)

The Utah Division of Public Utilities (“Division”) recommends no action by the Utah Public Service Commission (“Commission” or “PSC”) for temporary changes the electric utilities have made regarding disconnection, late fee, and related practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

The Commission issued an Action Request to the Division on March 27, 2020 to investigate disconnection, reconnection, and waiver fee policy changes made by utilities over which the PSC has jurisdiction in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The PSC requests comments from the Division by April 27, 2020. This is the Division’s response.

Discussion

The Division reviewed news releases issued by Rocky Mountain Power (“RMP”) and reviewed the websites for RMP and eleven electrical co-ops operating in the state of Utah. The Division also contacted nine of the co-ops telephonically. Mt. Wheeler Power and Empire Electric Association recently applied for and were granted an exception from regulation by the state of Utah. The following is a list of the electric utilities contacted:

- Rocky Mountain Power
- Deseret Power Electric Cooperative (wholesale generator, no retail customers)
- Bridger Valley Electric Association, Inc.
- Dixie Power
- Flowell Electric Association, Inc. (contacted through Dixie Power)
- Garkane Energy
- Moon Lake Electric Association, Inc.
- South Utah Valley Electric Service District
- Raft River REC, Inc.
- Wells REC
- Mt. Wheeler Power, Inc. (review of website only)
- Empire Electric Association, Inc. (review of website only)

RMP has temporarily suspended non-payment disconnections and is working with customers individually regarding payment for services, including payment of late fees. Each of the co-ops have acknowledged issues generally with COVID-19 on their individual websites and are working with members individually to determine whether to disconnect service, or to waive late fees on a case-by-case basis. All the electrical utilities are educating customers regarding additional avenues including third party agencies and programs available to assist customers with payment of their utility bills.

The electric utilities have not formally changed any tariffs governing disconnections, late fees, or any related matters in response to the COVID-19 virus. Each utility felt it was too early in the pandemic to gauge what the financial and operational effects will be on each utility and the utility’s customer base as a result of the disruption caused by the virus.

Conclusion

The Division concludes that practices have been modified during this pandemic but recommends the Commission take no action at this time.

Cc: Michele Beck, Office of Consumer Services
Jana Saba, Rocky Mountain Power
Jeff Peterson, Director, Utah REA