



Joseph Baldacci Senator,
District 9

THE MAINE SENATE
130th Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Philip Bartlett, Chairman
Maine Public Utilities Commission
26 Katherine Drive
Hallowell, ME 04347
phil.bartlett@maine.gov

January 1, 2021

Dear Chairman Bartlett and Honorable Commissioners of the Maine Public Utilities Commission,

As you know, a global public health emergency that began early this year is becoming even more deadly and catastrophic as we enter another winter.

Back in March the Public Utilities Commission had the good sense to enact a moratorium on electrical disconnections for both residential and commercial customers. Your order dated March 16, 2020 stated that “all electric transmission and distribution utilities, natural gas utilities, water utilities and telephone providers of last resort (POLR) service not engage in any disconnection activity until further notice. This includes the issuance of disconnection notices and actual service disconnections for all classes of customers.”

With urgency and respect we, as elected representatives of the people of Maine, request that the same moratorium be reinstated, effective immediately, and remain in place for a minimum of 120 days.

The number of jobless Mainers has dramatically increased this year as have the number of small businesses forced to shut down. In the last two months the infection rate for the Coronavirus has risen dramatically, increasing hospitalizations and deaths and increasing public calls for citizens to stay home or otherwise restrict their employment or travel. It is fair to say the dire economic and public health circumstances we face today are significantly worse than the situation we faced in March of this year.

As leaders and policymakers whose only duty is to the public interest it is incumbent upon your good offices to reinstate the same broad based moratorium the PUC imposed in March and to keep it in place for a minimum of 120 days.

Hope is on the way with increased vaccines and some federal economic help- but hope is not enough for families and businesses to survive safely, over the next few harsh winter months.

I look forward to your well considered response. I will continue to speak out and urge my colleagues in the House and Senate to do the same to make sure our constituents, the rate payers, are put first when it comes to our Public Utilities Commission.

Respectfully yours,

/s/ JOSEPH M. BALDACCI

State Senator Joseph M. Baldacci
(Senate District 9 / Bangor & Hermon)

Joining me in this letter are:

Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives Ryan Fecteau

State Senator Nathan Libby, Majority Leader of the Maine Senate

State Senator Eloise Vitelli, Assistant Majority Leader of the Maine Senate

Representative Seth Berry, House Chair of Energy and Utilities

State Senator Donna Bailey, Senate District 31

State Senator Ben Chipman, Senate District 27

State Senator Chip Curry, Senate District 11

State Senator Scott Cyrway, Senate District 16

State Senator Matthea Daughtry, Senate District 24

State Senator James Dill, Senate District 5

State Senator Anne Carney, Senate District 29

State Senator Marianne Moore, Senate District 6

State Senator Heather Sanborn, Senate District 28

State Senator Chloe Maxmin, Senate District 13

Representative Robert Alley, House District 138

Representative Art Bell, House District 47

Representative Heidi Brooks, House District 61

Representative Mark Bryant, House District 24

Representative Nathan Carlow, House District 16

Representative Kristen Cloutier, District 60

Representative Benjamin Collings, House District 42

Representative Lydia Crafts, House District 90

Representative Margaret Craven, House District 59
Representative Jan Dodge, House District 97
Representative Vicki Doudera, House District 94
Representative Richard Evans, House District 120
Representative Jeffrey Evangelos, House District 91
Representative Jessica Fay, House District 66
Representative Valli D. Geiger, House District 93
Representative Nicole Grohoski, House District 132
Representative Thom Harnett, House District 83
Representative Allison Hepler, House District 53
Representative Christopher Kessler, House District 32
Representative Grayson Lookner, House District 37
Representative Ann Matlack, House District 92
Representative Kristi Mathieson, House District 1
Representative David McCrea, House District 148
Representative Genevieve McDonald, House District 134
Representative Jay McCreight, House District 51
Representative Victoria Morales, House District 33
Representative Steve Moriarty, House District 45
Representative Rebecca J. Millett, House District 30
Representative Michele Meyer, House District 2
Representative Margaret O'Neil, House District 15
Representative Sarah Pebworth, House District 133
Representative Anne C. Perry, House District 140
Representative Dwayne Prescott, House District 17
Representative Morgan Rielly, House District 34
Representative Walter Riseman, House District 69
Representative Tiffany D Roberts, House District 6
Representative Melanie Sachs, House District 48
Representative Braden Sharpe, House District 46
Representative Holly B. Stover, House District 89
Representative Amy Roeder, House District 125
Representative Erin Sheehan, House District 12
Representative Denise Tepler, House District 54
Representative Lynne Williams, House District 135

Representative Charlotte M Warren, House District 84

Representative Barb Wood ,House District 38

Representative S. Paige Zeigler, House District 9

PS: If funding from the CARES Act or other considerations make a total moratorium impossible, and you do not intend to allow shutoffs of residential and small business customers, we would at least request that you bar utilities from issuing disconnection notices to such customers. Whether empty threats or real ones, these persistent calls, emails, visits and mailings are causing undue stress and hardship to many Maine residents who are already more than hard pressed. **And** increase the 30 day notice period to customers to 120 days as another alternative to consider.

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