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November x, 20xx

VIA EMAIL

{name }
{address }

Re: Collection of Monthly Bill Payments by Electric and Natural Gas Utilities during Winter

Dear _____:

With the advent of the winter heating season, monthly charges to many residential electric and gas customers may sharply increase because of increased usage and, in many cases, higher rates. In addition, individual financial difficulties and on-going challenges associated with high inflation and other economic factors, coupled with higher usage during the heating season, make it possible that higher than normal delinquencies will be experienced.

During its 2024 Reconvened Session, the General Assembly established certain restrictions and procedures regarding disconnection of utility services for nonpayment (Code of Virginia §§ 56-245.1:3 and 56-245.1:4). Among other things, disconnections are prohibited during certain extreme temperatures and on certain dates. Due to the Division of Public Utility Regulation's concern for the welfare of those who may be overburdened by higher utility bills, and consistent with past requests from the Commission, the Division of Public Utility Regulation is urging each utility to continue its efforts to make such arrangements as are reasonably practicable to avoid service terminations during the extremes of winter weather. Further, we request that all utility companies assist their customers where possible in availing themselves of energy assistance programs. Finally, staff will continue collecting information relative to delinquencies and service terminations. We request that you make every effort to assist them in this regard.

If situations arise that appear to warrant staff guidance, please contact us. Under all circumstances, the well-being of Virginians must be given first priority, and we urge your cooperation to that end.

Very truly yours,

David N. Essah

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Director, Division of Public Utility Regulation

cc: Darlene Savage, Manager, Consumer Services – Public Utility Regulation