

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
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March 23, 2020
Via E-Mail

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SUBJECT: Provider Activities to Support Customers Affected by the COVID-19
State of Emergency

TO: The five largest wireless providers and the top ten largest Internet Services
Providers (ISPs) in California—

I write to you in light of the national mobilization and states of emergency prompted by the spread of COVID-19.¹ It is the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) goal and purpose to help keep Californians safe and well informed.

First, I ask you to consider temporarily suspending data caps and data overage charges if you have not already done so. Second, I am requesting information on your customer commitments and other actions you have taken to support your customers. Third, I would like to arrange a regular conference call so we may establish a clear line of communication to update each other on our efforts and resolve issues as they arise.

Elimination of data caps and overage charges

This pandemic has brought to light and exacerbated the digital divide in many communities. To minimize the disruption caused by limited access to the Internet or the need to use mobile rather than fixed broadband, I call on all of you to temporarily suspend data caps and drop data overage charges on your broadband plans for a period of time.

Information on commitments

Many of you have already shared information regarding the commitments you have made to your customers. Thank you for doing so. We are working to make this information publicly available in one location here:

www.cpuc.ca.gov/covid.

If you haven't already done so, please email to Michael Minkus (E-mail included below) the following information as quickly as possible, but no later than close of business Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

Please provide the following information:

- Link to your COVID-19 webpage(s).
- What is your commitment to waive disconnection and fees for nonpayment? For what period of time will these commitments be effective?

¹ On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency in California related to COVID-19. On March 12, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a new Executive Order¹ recognizing that individuals exposed to COVID-19 may be unable to report to work due to illness or quarantines, and ordering numerous measures including social distancing. On March 17, CPUC Executive Director sent a letter to communications companies asking them to institute the protections adopted in the CPUC's disaster relief proceeding.

- What is your commitment to waive data caps or increase data allowances and download speeds? For what period of time will these commitments be effective?
- For mobile companies, do you permit tethering with other devices for all plans?
- Please provide information on affordable offerings:
 - Do you have an affordable offer or program?
 - What are the eligibility requirements?
 - Is the plan available throughout your service territory? If not, in what geographic areas is the plan available?
 - How have you increased advertising of your affordable offerings and are they readily accessible on your website?
 - Do you offer Lifeline throughout your service territory for voice and broadband as applicable?
 - Please provide any additional information on free or reduced cost service offers and the period of time they will be available.
 - Please provide a link to your affordable plan signup webpage.
- Please identify efforts undertaken to collaborate with and meet the needs of K-12 and college students.
- Please identify any other efforts you have undertaken to collaborate with other state agencies, to address broadband needs, and address the needs of those experiencing financial hardships.

Regular calls on updates and responses

Communications Division Director Robert Osborn will be scheduling a 30-minute call every other week on Wednesdays at 10:00 AM to hear from you about any customer-affecting or operational issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. I realize your time is important, so the agenda will be an update from the CPUC on the state's efforts and an opportunity hear from you on any issues your companies are experiencing. If, after the call, you prefer to submit your updates individually, please send them to Michael Minkus.

Until then, please provide Michael Minkus with the name and contact information for the person who will be attending this call for your company.

Thank you for all you are doing for Californians at this difficult time. I wish the best for you and your families and look forward to our continuing dialogue. Contact information for Communications Division Director Robert Osborn and his Policy Advisor Michael Minkus is below.

Sincerely,



Alice Stebbins
Executive Director
California Public Utilities Commission

Contacts

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CC: President Marybel Batjer, CPUC
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