

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



VIA E-MAIL
July 14, 2021

TO: Providers of Voice Telephony in California
FROM: Rachel Peterson, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Extension of Moratorium on Disconnection for Non-Payment and Fees
for Late Payment for Voice Service Through September 30, 2021

On December 17, 2020, the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission or CPUC) adopted Resolution M-4848, which implemented a 90-day moratorium on fees for late payment and disconnection for non-payment for voice service for residential and small business customers and gave the Commission's Executive Director the authority to extend the moratorium. On March 23, 2021, I extended the moratorium adopted in Resolution M-4848 until July 15, 2021. The CPUC shall soon consider a Resolution implementing an additional moratorium on fees for late payment and disconnection for non-payment of voice service for residential and small business customers through September 30, 2021. By this letter, I am extending the moratorium adopted in Resolution M-4848 until the Commission votes on the additional moratorium. As detailed below, it is still critical that the moratorium be extended.

Although the Governor rescinded some measures in June 2021, California is still transitioning in its management of the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted every aspect of life in California. As of July 13, 2021, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in California has increased by over 200,000 cases since March, totaling 3,736,999 cases statewide and resulting in 63,478 deaths.¹ As such, customers are still at risk of falling behind on utility payments during the transition period and access to these services is needed as school attendance and employment ramp back up. Moreover, having access to essential voice services is critical to maintaining Californians' health and safety in this period. The state is currently experiencing a drought and is in the midst of wildfire season, which make access to voice services paramount to allow Californians access to 911 and emergency response services. In addition, extending the moratorium for voice services is consistent with the Commission's recent decision to extend its moratorium on disconnections for non-payment regarding energy utility services until September 30, 2021.²

While vaccines to protect against COVID-19 are being administered, many Californians remain unvaccinated³ and it is unclear whether we have reached herd immunity in the state with residents 16 years old and older.⁴ New variants of the virus introduce uncertainty over vaccine

¹ <https://covid19.ca.gov/state-dashboard/>.

² Per Ordering Paragraph 1 of D.21-06-036: "Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, Southern California Gas Company, PacifiCorp, Liberty Utilities (CalPeco Electric) LLC, Bear Valley Electric Company, Inc., Alpine Natural Gas, Inc., and West Coast Gas Company shall not resume disconnections for nonpayment until September 30, 2021."

³ <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccination-progress-data/> for July 13, 2021.

⁴ <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2021/05/california-herd-immunity/>.

efficacy.⁵ The Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus is spreading, and 24 states are seeing at least a 10% uptick in cases, including in California, where cases have increased since mid-June.⁶

Given the ongoing nature of COVID-19 pandemic and its impact in California, I hereby authorize an extension of the moratorium adopted in Resolution M-4848 until the Commission votes on the additional moratorium.

Sincerely,

Ryan O. Dulin for Rachel Peterson

Rachel Peterson
Executive Director

cc: President Marybel Batjer, CPUC
Commissioner Martha Guzman Aceves, CPUC
Commissioner Clifford Rechtschaffen, CPUC
Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma, CPUC
Commissioner Darcie L. Houck, CPUC
Grant Mack, Director, Office of Government Affairs, CPUC

⁵ <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/a-new-strain-of-coronavirus-what-you-should-know>.

⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2020/health/coronavirus-us-maps-and-cases/> for July 13, 2021; <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/08/health/us-coronavirus-thursday/index.html>.