

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



VIA E-MAIL
March 23, 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 July 15, 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 by up to 90 days. For the reasons discussed below, I extend the moratorium adopted in Resolution M-4848 for 90 days, until July 15, 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect every aspect of life in California. Social distancing, shelter-in-place requirements, executive and county orders, and proclamations continue to create a risk that customers may fall behind on utility payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic at the same time that shelter-in-place orders will likely cause increased usage of utility services resulting in higher utility bills. Having access to essential voice services is critical to maintaining Californians' health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of March 23, 2021, California has 3,549,101 confirmed cases of COVID-19, resulting in 56,596 deaths.¹

While vaccines to protect against COVID-19 are now being administered, most Californians remain ineligible for a vaccine, and there is significantly more demand than vaccine supply. Further, the decline in positive COVID-19 cases and death rates in California has plateaued. This change in the trajectory of the COVID-19 virus has raised significant concerns with Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control, and Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of

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

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the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Both Dr. Walensky and Dr. Fauci fear that there could be a COVID-19 spike in the near future, and that new variants of COVID-19 could spread more rapidly.² Californians remain in a perilous current economic and public health situation.

Ordering Paragraph 5 of Resolution M-4848 states: "The moratorium will go into effect 30 days from the date of approval, and will last for 90 days, unless the Executive Director authorizes one or more extensions not to exceed an additional 90 days."³ Given the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, by this letter, I hereby authorize a 90-day extension of Resolution M-4848, until July 15, 2021.

Sincerely,



Rachel Peterson
Executive Director

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

² <https://www.nbcnews.com/science/science-news/cdc-concerned-covid-cases-stopped-falling-rcna319>
<https://www.npr.org/2021/03/03/973286247/now-is-not-the-time-to-stop-wearing-a-mask-says-cdc-director-rochelle-walensky>
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/04/health/us-coronavirus-thursday/index.html>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/06/world/fauci-covid-variants-spike.html>

³ Resolution M-4848 at 17.