



HENRY McMASTER
GOVERNOR

May 13, 2020

Nanette S. Edwards, Esquire
Executive Director
Office of Regulatory Staff
1401 Main Street, Suite 850
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Director Edwards:

I write to address two separate but related issues regarding utilities and cooperatives serving the State of South Carolina.

First, I ask that you please extend my sincere appreciation to the hard-working linemen and employees of our State's utilities and cooperatives for their steadfast efforts and dedicated service during these difficult times. In addition to providing essential utility services while navigating the extraordinary circumstances associated with the 2019 Novel Coronavirus ("COVID-19"), many of these same linemen and employees were also tasked with responding to the unprecedented severe weather outbreak that recently impacted our State. Their service to the people of our State is noted and most appreciated.

Second, as you will recall, I wrote to you on March 14, 2020, to ask that the Office of Regulatory Staff ("ORS") communicate and effectuate my request that regulated utilities and cooperatives serving South Carolina not suspend or disconnect essential services for nonpayment during the State of Emergency. It is my understanding that ORS subsequently conveyed my request to the Public Service Commission ("PSC"), as well as to utilities and cooperatives, and that service disconnections by utilities were successfully suspended. I believe these actions were beneficial to the people of South Carolina, and I appreciate the efforts of all involved—regulators and utilities—in thoughtfully considering and promptly responding to my request.

As you are aware, the State is now in the process of safely, strategically, and incrementally reopening businesses and facilitating economic recovery and revitalization, while also simultaneously addressing and mitigating the significant economic and other impacts on individuals, families, and businesses. Consistent with these efforts, I ask that ORS work with the PSC and providers of utility services to take similar steps to allow for a return to normal business

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operations, while continuing to provide flexibility and assistance to customers and ratepayers. Local organizations, such as community action agencies, will play a vital role in this process, and I encourage these entities and the utilities to streamline their administrative processes as much as possible to accommodate individuals and businesses in need of assistance. To this end, please relay my request that providers of utility services proceed with developing and implementing plans for phasing in normal business operations, while also working with their customers and ratepayers who need assistance to refer them to local organizations or arrange payment plans that will avoid or minimize penalties and service interruptions.

Thank you for your continued leadership and consideration of these important issues. As always, if I can be of service or assistance regarding this matter or otherwise, please do not hesitate to call.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Henry McMaster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "H" and a long, sweeping underline.

Henry McMaster