

NEWS RELEASE

INDIANA UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION (IURC)

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IURC Initiates Investigation Regarding Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Hoosier Ratepayers, Utilities

Investigation Will Include Two Phases; First Order with Guidance Expected before End of Disconnection Moratorium

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC or Commission) issued an Order today initiating an investigation into the impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on Hoosier ratepayers and utilities. Governor Eric Holcomb issued Executive Order 20-02 on March 6, 2020, declaring a public health emergency for the pandemic, followed by Executive Order 20-05 on March 19, 2020, which included a disconnection moratorium for utilities. Indiana’s public health emergency, including the prohibition of utility disconnections, has been renewed through subsequent Executive Orders, and is currently set to expire on June 30, 2020.

The Commission’s Order is in response to two petitions filed by parties on the subject: the first, from the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC), was a request for an investigation to consider the impacts of COVID-19 on utility service and seeking certain ratepayer protections; the second: from multiple utilities in the state including Duke Energy Indiana, LLC, Indiana Gas Company, Inc., Indiana Natural Gas Corporation, Indiana Michigan Power Company, Indianapolis Power & Light Company, Midwest Natural Gas Corporation, Northern Indiana Public Service Company, LLC, Ohio Valley Gas Corp. and Ohio Valley Gas, Inc., Southern Indiana Gas & Electric Co., and Sycamore Gas Company, was a request seeking certain relief related to the impact of COVID-19 on their utility operations. These two petitions were consolidated into one case – Cause No. 45380.

The Order states, “The Commission finds it appropriate, as requested by the OUCC, to conduct a generic investigation under the consolidated Cause No. 45380 to consider and address the impacts of COVID-19 and the Indiana Governor’s COVID-19 Executive Orders on the rates and provision of utility services by all jurisdictional Indiana utilities and on their ratepayers.”

The investigation will occur in two phases. In Phase 1, the Commission requests information from all parties regarding disconnections, utility fees, and customer payment arrangements, as well as regulatory accounting. The Commission plans to issue an Order prior to the current June 30, 2020, expiration of the executive disconnection moratorium. The Phase 2 procedural schedule will be established after consideration of the Phase 1 issues and includes several requests for information, subject to additional requests via docket entry. Phase 2 also includes a request that jurisdictional Indiana utilities intending to participate in the proceeding and request rate relief provide additional information in monthly reports beginning from the date of today’s Order. The Commission

anticipates that impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic may not be fully understood for months, if not years, as the effect is ongoing.

In its Order, the Commission states, “...it would be unreasonable to expect that the financial, health, and other hardships currently being experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic would immediately disappear upon expiration of any public health declaration or disconnection moratorium.”

The Commission also states that all jurisdictional utilities should be notified of this proceeding and allowed an opportunity to participate (not just the utilities in the above-mentioned joint petition). Additionally, the Order states, “...the Commission encourages those with a substantial interest in the subject matter of this investigation to seek intervention in accordance with 170 IAC 1-1.1-11.”

The Commission welcomes comments from stakeholders and consumers. The public may provide comments to the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC), the state agency that represents the public in cases before the Commission. Comments may be submitted online at www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm or by mail or email:

Mail: Consumer Services Staff
Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor
115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 South
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Email: uccinfo@oucc.in.gov

Written comments should include the ratepayer’s name, mailing address, and a reference to “Cause No. 45380.”

All submitted documents relating to this case, including the Order approved by the Commission today, will be posted on the Commission’s Online Services portal [here](#) and can be found by searching for 45380.

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The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (Commission) is a fact-finding body that hears evidence in cases filed before it and makes decisions based on the evidence presented in those cases. An advocate of neither the public nor the utilities, the Commission is required by state statute to make decisions that balance the interests of all parties to ensure the utilities provide safe and reliable service at just and reasonable rates. The Commission also serves as a resource to the legislature, executive branch, state agencies, and the public by providing information regarding Indiana’s utilities and the regulatory process. In addition, Commission members and staff are actively involved with regional, national, and federal organizations regarding utilities issues affecting Indiana. For more information, please visit www.in.gov/iurc.