

## NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD

Issued: September 9, 2021

### In the Matter of an Inquiry into Actions by Electric and Natural Gas Utilities in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency

**PUC Docket Number(s):** E, G-999/CI-20-375

**Comment Period:** Comment period closes September 15, 2021 at 4:30pm

*The Executive Secretary finds good cause for shortening the comment period to allow timely action on the Minnesota Housing and Finance Agency (MHFA) request to help protect vulnerable people from disconnection of utility services.*

*Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.*

**Issue:** What action should the Commission take on the request by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency to include a pending application for RentHelpMN utility assistance to the criteria that protect against utility disconnection?

#### Topics Open for Comment:

- Should the Commission approve the request by the MHFA to prohibit utility disconnections until April 30, 2022, for customers with a pending application for RentHelpMN?

#### Background:

In the Commission's May 26, 2021 order in this docket, it established the following:

5. The Commission prohibits disconnections of customers with past due balances who have a pending application or have been deemed eligible for LIHEAP/EAP assistance for the duration of the transition period (April 30, 2022).

On September 9, 2021, the MHFA filed a letter requesting that the Commission deem pending RentHelpMN applications the same as LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program) applications and prohibit disconnection for certain customers.

RentHelpMN is federal assistance administered by the MHFA that makes it possible for eligible renters to catch up on overdue rent and utilities dating back to March 13, 2020. In addition to LIHEAP, some utility customers are taking advantage of RentHelpMN assistance to pay their utility

bills; however, without a change by the Commission customers with RentHelpMN applications are subject to utility disconnections.

As noted above, the Executive Secretary finds good cause for shortening the comment period to allow timely action on the MHFA request to help protect vulnerable people from disconnection of utility services.

**Filing Requirements:** Utilities, telecommunications carriers, official parties, and state agencies are **required** to file documents using the Commission’s electronic filing system (eFiling). All parties, participants and interested persons are encouraged to use eFiling: [mn.gov/puc](https://mn.gov/puc), select *eFiling*, and follow the prompts.

**Submit Public Comments:**

**Online:** Visit [mn.gov/puc](https://mn.gov/puc), select Comment and follow the prompts

**Email:** [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us)

**U.S. Mail:** Consumer Affairs Office  
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
121 7th Place East, Suite 350  
St. Paul MN 55101

**Full Case Record:** See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission’s website at [mn.gov/puc](https://mn.gov/puc), select *Search eDockets*, enter the year (20) and the docket number (375), select *Search*.

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**Questions about this docket or Commission process and procedure?** Contact Commission staff, Kelly Martone, at [kelly.martone@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.martone@state.mn.us) or 651-201-2245.

For questions or more information on RentHelpMN, please visit MN Housing Agency’s website: <https://www.mnhousing.gov/sites/np/covid19emergencyrentalassistance>

**Change your mailing preferences:** Email [docketing.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:docketing.puc@state.mn.us) or call Leesa Norton at 651-201-2246.

To request this document in another format such as large print or audio, call 651-296-0406 (voice). Consumers with a hearing or speech impairment may call using their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service or email [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us) for assistance.

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Chrishna Beard, hereby certify that I have this day, served a true and correct copy of the following document to all persons at the addresses indicated below or on the attached list by electronic filing, electronic mail, courier, interoffice mail or by depositing the same enveloped with postage paid in the United States mail at St. Paul, Minnesota.

**Minnesota Public Utilities Commission  
NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD**

Docket Number **E, G-999/CI-20-375**  
Dated this 9th day of September, 2021

/s/ Chrishna Beard

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