

Emergency Agenda 6-20 - Item 2A

THIS ORDER IS NOT A FINAL ORDER AND MAY BE SUBSTANTIALLY REVISED PRIOR TO ENTRY OF A FINAL ORDER BY THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF NEVADA

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF NEVADA

Emergency Order related to utility service and COVID-19.)
) Docket No. 20-03021
)

At an emergency meeting of the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada, held at its offices on Friday, March 27, 2020.

PRESENT: Chair Hayley Williamson
Commissioner C.J. Manthe
Assistant Commission Secretary Trisha Osborne

[PROPOSED] ORDER

The Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (“Commission”) makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law:

I. INTRODUCTION

On March 12, 2020, Governor Sisolak declared a state of emergency for the State of Nevada due to the novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”) and concerns for the health and safety of the population. On March 17, 2020, Governor Sisolak ordered the closure of nonessential businesses as a part of Nevada’s health response and risk mitigation initiative. The services provided by public utilities regulated by the Commission have been deemed essential for Nevadans during this time of health response and mitigation effort.

II. SUMMARY

Consistent with the Governor’s declaration of a state of emergency, public utilities throughout Nevada have proactively implemented measures to assist customers who are experiencing financial hardships related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission applauds these proactive measures. To facilitate the review and recovery of prudently-incurred costs associated with utilities’ efforts to accommodate customers during this time of uncertainty, including costs associated with suspending the termination, discontinuance, and/or disconnection of services, the Commission directs all rate-regulated jurisdictional utilities to track such costs for review in future proceedings before the Commission.

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III. EMERGENCY ORDER

1. The Commission is responsible for supervising and regulating the operation and maintenance of public utilities, including “provid[ing] for the safe, economic, efficient, prudent, and reliable operation and service of public utilities.”¹

2. Ensuring the continued provision of essential public utility services to customers affected by COVID-19 promotes public safety and assists in mitigating the effects of the virus. Issuance of an emergency order is appropriate under the unique circumstances presented by COVID-19. The provision of public utility service is necessary for the safety of the public, particularly under the current challenges of mitigating the effects of COVID-19.

3. Accordingly, the Commission directs all of the rate-regulated public utilities within its jurisdiction, including providers of electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, and telecommunications services, to begin recording, as of March 12, 2020, in regulatory asset accounts amounts that reflect the costs of maintaining service to customers affected by COVID-19 whose service would have been terminated, discontinued, and/or disconnected under normally-applicable terms of service. Such regulatory asset accounts must be maintained in a manner that will allow costs to be readily identified in future Commission proceedings where the utilities may seek recovery of the reasonably and prudently incurred costs.

4. Recognizing the fluid nature of the current circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission will, as necessary, reevaluate this order and its terms.

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¹ See NRS 703.150 and 704.001.

THEREFORE, it is ORDERED:

1. In accordance with this order, all rate-regulated public utilities subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction shall establish regulatory asset accounts for the purpose of recording amounts that reflect the costs, beginning March 12, 2020, of maintaining service to customers affected by COVID-19 whose service would have been terminated, discontinued, and/or disconnected under normally-applicable terms of service.

By the Commission,

HAYLEY WILLIAMSON,
Chair and Presiding Officer

CJ MANTHE, Commissioner

Attest: _____
TRISHA OSBORNE,
Assistant Commission Secretary

Dated: Carson City, Nevada

(SEAL)