

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2020

Mark C. Christie  
Chairman  
The Commonwealth of Virginia State Corporation Commission  
P.O. Box 1157  
Richmond, VA 23218

Judith Williams Jagdmann  
Commissioner  
The Commonwealth of Virginia State Corporation Commission  
P.O. Box 1157  
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Commissioners:

We write today concerning the ongoing public health emergency in the Commonwealth of Virginia caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Virginia State Corporation Commission's (SCC) role in regulating public utilities during this state of emergency. Due to this ongoing health crisis, we respectfully request that the Commission promptly issue an order suspending the ability of any public utility in Virginia to charge late fees through the duration of Virginia's state of emergency.

First, we want to applaud the Commission for its recent order directing regulated electric, natural gas, and water companies in Virginia to suspend service disconnections due to non-payment for at least 60 days in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The temporary suspension of service disconnections is necessary to minimize adverse impacts on Virginians and public health. The continued service of public utilities – including electricity, water, and natural gas – is essential to protect the health and well-being of Virginians and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

While the suspension of service disconnections will ensure the continued service of essential public utilities for Virginians, the unprecedented scope of this public health crisis requires additional measures to ease the burden on Virginians. One such measure should be a temporary suspension of late payment charges by public utilities. As this public health emergency intensifies, thousands of Virginians will likely be furloughed or have their work hours substantially reduced. This will put an enormous strain on countless families in the Commonwealth to make ends meet. Suspending late fees during this state of emergency would help ease the burden on the most vulnerable Virginians during this tumultuous time, if only slightly.

Again, we want to thank the Commission for its recent order directing public utilities to suspend service disconnections due to non-payment during this public health emergency. We also want to

thank you in advance for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to working with you and other stakeholders to ensure the health and well-being of all Virginians moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark R. Warner". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Kaine". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator