

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 2, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
Committee on Appropriations  
S-220, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

As Congress continues to work on legislation to address the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to reject proposals that would unintentionally restrict how utility service providers, including electric, natural gas, and water utilities, work with their customers and manage their businesses. We appreciate and share the desire to ensure no citizen is deprived of something as critical as these services during the pandemic. However, proposals that impose overly broad debt collection requirements and service disconnection moratoria at the federal level are unprecedented, as state public service commissions already regulate such issues.

Unfortunately, the “Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act” (or HEROES Act) would impose debt collection prohibition and moratoria policies that are overly broad. Such policies would remove the flexibility customers and utilities are accustomed to while likely increasing rates for those who do have the means to pay their bills.

In response to the pandemic, the majority of states have already enacted a law, issued an executive order, or, through their respective state public service commission, issued an order mandating moratoria on utility service disconnections for nonpayment. States that did not pass a law or issue an order regulate utilities which voluntarily established service disconnection moratoria. In fact, on March 19, the Edison Electric Institute, whose membership is comprised of the utilities that provide electricity to 220 million Americans, announced that all of its member companies had suspended service disconnections.

Each state regulates utility retail service issues in a manner that best reflects the needs of the utilities and, more importantly, the consumers they serve. Any federal action to impose broad moratoria and debt collection policies would be inappropriate, unnecessary, intrude on matters traditionally regulated by states, and create a significant risk of unintended consequences.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our staff. We look forward to working with both of you to protect consumers and utility service providers during this national crisis.

Sincerely,



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Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator



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Mike Crapo  
United States Senator