



1 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Good morning. Under  
2 the Open Meetings Act and in accordance with the  
3 Governor's Executive Orders, I call the April 1,  
4 2021, Regular Open Meeting to order. Before we  
5 proceed, for the clarity of the record, I would ask  
6 everyone to state their name and to speak slowly  
7 and clearly so that the court reporter can capture  
8 everything that is said.

9 All four commissioners are on and  
10 so we have a quorum.

11 We have 22 requests to speak today  
12 under Illinois Administrative Code Section 1700.10.  
13 I hear a little bit of feedback, so if you're not  
14 speaking, please -- if you could please mute your  
15 line, that would be helpful. Thank you.

16 Under 2 Illinois Administrative  
17 Code Section 1700.10, any person desiring to  
18 address the Commission shall be allowed up to three  
19 minutes. However, Subsection D of the same section  
20 requires that the total time for presentations at  
21 any meetings shall be limited to 30 minutes unless  
22 a Commissioner moves for, and the Commission

1 approves, a longer period. To give everyone a fair  
2 chance to speak, I would like to motion the  
3 Commissioners to allow extending the public  
4 speaking time beyond 30 minutes to allow all 22  
5 speakers to have their whole three minutes to  
6 present to the Commission.

7 Is there a second?

8 COMMISSIONER BOCANEGRA: Chair Zalewski,  
9 this is Commissioner Bocanegra. I can second that.

10 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Are there  
11 any objections to extending the public speaking  
12 period beyond 30 minutes?

13 (No verbal response.)

14 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
15 public speaking period is extended. With that,  
16 let's proceed to the public comments going in the  
17 order we received the requests to speak. We will  
18 hear from the following 22 people.

19 First, William Demorea Crawford,  
20 Krystle Able, Beau Barber, Ronald J. Hamm, David  
21 Emerson, John Keating, Eddie Pratt, Jr., Benjamin  
22 Theobald, Ira Dawson, Nicholis Hall. Arthur

1 Paganini, Anthony Stephens, Jessica Motsinger, Dat  
2 Hong Luu, Abigail Buckholtz, Helena Duncan, Michael  
3 Stephens, Melinda Hilker, Marc Girdler, David Max  
4 Axelrod, and then, finally, Luke Lee.

5 Please note that the Commission  
6 will not be responding to any comments. I would  
7 like to note that any person wishing to provide  
8 further comments may submit a written statement to  
9 the Commission. The written comments may be  
10 submitted by going on to the ICC website at  
11 ICC.Illinois.gov, go to the e-Docket, then look for  
12 the Docket No. 20-0309 and in the docket, click the  
13 "File a Comment" link. You can also call the  
14 Illinois Commerce Commission Consumer Services  
15 Division at (800) 524-0795 and they can also help  
16 you submit further comments.

17 First, we have William Demorea  
18 Crawford. Mr. Crawford are you on? Mr. Crawford  
19 are you there? I don't see your name. Doing one  
20 last check. Yes. I don't see your name.

21 (No verbal response.)

22 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Okay. Is Krystle Able

1 on?

2 MS. ABLE: Yes. Can you hear me?

3 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you.

4 Ms. Able, you will have three minutes. My policy  
5 advisor, Tanya, will be running the clock. So  
6 please state and spell your name for the court  
7 reporter and then she will start the clock. Thank  
8 you.

9 MS. ABLE: My name is Krystle Able,  
10 K-R-Y-S-T-L-E, Able, A-B-L-E. I'm speaking today  
11 as the representative of the Bloomington-Normal  
12 Democratic Socialists of America, as well as my own  
13 experience with utility shutoffs as a property  
14 manager and a customer of Ameren.

15 On March 29, the eviction  
16 moratorium was extended. However, this moratorium  
17 will not protect renters who are being evicted due  
18 to utility shutoffs. This is a direct quote from  
19 the order. Nothing in this order precludes  
20 eviction based on a tenant, lessee, or resident  
21 violating any other contractual obligation other  
22 than the timely payment of rent.

1                   While I was a property manager at  
2 a very large multi-unit housing complex in  
3 Bloomington, we evicted people for having their  
4 utilities shutoff. It was in the lease that if we  
5 got notice that utilities were reverted back to the  
6 landlord, or were shutoff at the unit, we would  
7 immediately send out a notice to comply or be  
8 evicted. This was not an empty threat in the  
9 lease; we did evict people and the judges in McLean  
10 County upheld these evictions, just as I imagine  
11 they will again, even now, in the midst of the  
12 pandemic because of the language in the moratorium  
13 extension order.

14                   McLean County's emergency housing  
15 infrastructure is severely underfunded. Our  
16 shelter capacity, like all the rest in the state,  
17 has dropped dramatically due to COVID mitigation.  
18 Emergency, state, and federal funding has been  
19 exhausted at many agencies and there are  
20 entanglements and bureaucracy often seen in getting  
21 funds from local governments into the hands of the  
22 non-profits that are providing housing services.

1                   A new wave of evictions, due to  
2 utility shutoffs as well as people having to  
3 voluntarily move out of their homes, will not be  
4 cushioned by our social service programs in McLean  
5 County. People with evictions on the record won't  
6 be able to find new landlords or have options to  
7 purchase. The moratorium on utility shutoff must  
8 be extended until municipalities have a better  
9 grasp on direct aid.

10                   In Bloomington, our direct aid  
11 applications are piled up with more than 200 people  
12 waiting for their applications to be processed, and  
13 the number of people who have applied versus the  
14 number of people we know need help has been  
15 astonishingly low. People do not realize what aid  
16 is available and the application processes are long  
17 and confusing, with a lot of hoops to jump through.  
18 People are being denied, or not given enough help,  
19 and feeling helpless and hopeless. Even people  
20 that qualify for LIHEAP may not get enough help to  
21 prevent a shutoff.

22                   I, myself, applied for help and

1 was only given a \$200 one-time grant to apply to an  
2 Ameren bill that had climbed to over \$700, in full,  
3 for shutdown and I had no daycare options for my  
4 severely disabled son. Ameren wanted \$575 to  
5 reinstate my payment arrangement. I didn't have it  
6 and just got a disconnect warning a few weeks ago.

7                   Please extend the utility  
8 moratorium and give municipalities time to get a  
9 better grasp on direct aid processes and decide how  
10 to divvy up the direct aid they are receiving from  
11 the federal government. In Bloomington, these  
12 conversations are just now beginning. Please give  
13 us more time. Thank you.

14           CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Next, Beau  
15 Barber. Mr. Barber, are you on?

16           MR. BARBER: Yes. Can you hear me?

17           CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you. You  
18 will also have three minutes. Please state and  
19 spell your name, and then, once you begin, Tonya  
20 will start the timer.

21           MR. BARBER: Okay. My name is Beau Barber,  
22 spelled B-E-A-U and then B-A-R-B-E-R.



1                   Okay. So hi, my name is Beau  
2 Barber. I'm a Champaign County Democratic Precinct  
3 committee person. I am also a Ph.D. student in  
4 Engineering at the University of Illinois,  
5 Urbana-Champaign. So I know about what the  
6 education involved is like for engineering. You  
7 know, every engineer is told at least once in their  
8 training, or their learning, if not numerous times:  
9 If your calculations for some design are off, or  
10 you did not consider something important, people  
11 will die. You're told that -- every engineer is  
12 told this at least once.

13                   And that is why ethical and  
14 professional engineers always consider, you know, a  
15 safety factor or take some kind of risk mitigation  
16 strategy. And what I see in the current reopening  
17 plan, I don't see reasonable risk mitigation  
18 strategy brought into this. The mean-tested  
19 measures include, you know, just the mean-measured  
20 tested -- the mean-tested measures included do not  
21 sufficiently account for the rising number of cases  
22 like we saw last fall -- we're seeing a similar

1 trend.

2                   While at the same time only one,  
3 you know -- just over one in three people  
4 vaccinated over the age of -- there's only one in  
5 three people over the age of 16 who have been  
6 vaccinated at this point, and I'm, literally,  
7 sitting in the parking lot of my public health  
8 department about to get my second shot. And I only  
9 got it, that being my second shot, this early  
10 because I have underlying health conditions. The  
11 rest of the state, for the most part, 16 years and  
12 older won't have access to even their first dose  
13 until April 12 -- you know, it's a little under two  
14 weeks from now.

15                   And it's because of this and  
16 because of what I saw in news on Tuesday that made  
17 it more apparent to me that, you know, reasonable  
18 risk mitigation strategies were not considered in  
19 this reopening plan. So what I'm referencing is  
20 ABC 7's news article from Tuesday titled, "Illinois  
21 Utility Shutoff Moratorium Ends Wednesday. How to  
22 Get Help Paying Bills," by Leah Hope, where the

1 Chair, respectfully, says, "It's important to note  
2 the Bill Payment Assistance Program is a finite  
3 fund so it runs out, so call soon."

4 This indicates to me that you knew  
5 the consequences of what would happen if you went  
6 forward with this reopening plan, knowing there was  
7 not enough resources at this current moment to  
8 handle what -- you know, trauma, hardship, and even  
9 debts that are going to come because of this  
10 reopening plan allowed that -- you voted to allow  
11 shutoff to resume. And you voted yes anyways.  
12 And so you know, clearly, there was not a  
13 legitimate ethical consideration brought into it.

14 And, you know, to me that means  
15 that this moratorium needs extending, this plan  
16 needs to be re-evaluated, otherwise, people will  
17 die, and that's not a debatable fact. Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Next,  
19 Mr. Ronald J. Hamm. Mr. Hamm, are you on?

20 MR. HAMM: Yes, I am. I'm here.

21 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Okay. Great.

22 Mr. Hamm, please state and spell your name, and

1 then when you start speaking, we will go on the  
2 clock.

3 MR. HAMM: My name is Ronald Hamm,  
4 R-O-N-A-L-D H-A-M-M.

5 Almost one year ago today, George  
6 Floyd was killed by the police officer, Derek  
7 Chauvin. This instigated waves of protests against  
8 police violence, and waves of police violence,  
9 multiple charges still ongoing. The government of  
10 the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and  
11 Minnesota State all had opportunities to prevent  
12 this instability resulting from this action, but  
13 refused to act until that instability became  
14 impossible to ignore, both politically and  
15 generally. And by then, that instability was too  
16 late to stop.

17 And so we understood that the  
18 refusal of these governments to act is not  
19 necessarily maleficent. Politics is a complex and  
20 difficult process at times, and as a result, most  
21 politicians default to the path of least  
22 resistance. More often than not, that path is to

1 do what was already being done, as is the case with  
2 the moratorium on utility shutoffs.

3 I do not assume that the people of  
4 this Commission are ghouls that delight in the  
5 suffering of the poor. I assume that the people of  
6 this Commission are unelected bureaucrats put in  
7 place to ensure the status quo. The moratorium on  
8 utility shutoffs was set to expire and it is  
9 simply easier to allow that to happen.

10 But it needs to be understood that  
11 this caused a great deal of instability in this  
12 community. Not just for all the reasons that every  
13 other person has mentioned, and will mention, but  
14 because all these things compound and multiply one  
15 another.

16 This country -- the entire country  
17 is in a state of wide-scale political instability,  
18 due to decades of intermittent maleficence and  
19 inaction by federal and state governments. Regular  
20 people despise the people who run this country,  
21 whether those people be Democrats or Republicans.  
22 More worryingly, the government seems to have

1 nothing but contempt for their people.

2 I and three others were thrown out  
3 of a press conference last Wednesday before we had  
4 a chance to ask about these shutoffs. And there  
5 are reasons, outside of the control of this  
6 Council, and anyone in the state, that things are  
7 very soon going to become more unstable.

8 Choosing to create more  
9 instability, to compound that instability in such a  
10 serious way as you are planning on doing, in such a  
11 way that we know would spike cases of COVID, would  
12 spike hospitalizations, would be irresponsible and  
13 an abandonment of the public good, or put another  
14 way -- extending the moratorium on eviction  
15 shutoffs will work to ensure the safety and health  
16 of this community and would stabilize the community  
17 in unsafe times.

18 The community has a -- this  
19 Commission has a responsibility to act in the  
20 public good and consequently to extend the  
21 moratorium on utility shutoffs. I do not believe  
22 this Commission will act on this responsibility.

1 That is not what you were appointed to do; but you  
2 have a chance to. Exceptional circumstances call  
3 for exceptional measures and we are, unfortunately,  
4 living through exceptional circumstances.

5 I would add, since I have the  
6 time, that threatening the well-being of the  
7 community because some companies stand to, maybe,  
8 lose some profit, is exactly the reason former  
9 President Trump stated for not acting on the  
10 coronavirus until it, too, was too late to stop. I  
11 thank the Council for their time.

12 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Next,  
13 David Emerson. Mr. Emerson? Mr. Emerson, are you  
14 there? I don't see you dialed in. Okay.

15 (No verbal response.)

16 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: John Keating?  
17 Mr. Keating? Last call for John Keating?

18 (No verbal response.)

19 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Mr. Eddie Pratt, Jr.?

20 MR. PRATT: I'm here. Can you hear me?

21 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you.

22 Mr. Pratt, again, please state and spell your name,

1 and then, when you start speaking we will start the  
2 timer.

3 MR. PRATT: Yes. My name is Eddie Pratt,  
4 Jr., that's E-D-D-I-E P-R-A-T-T, Junior. I'm here  
5 representing the CU Human Rights Coalition.

6 When I spoke here last, I  
7 mentioned some of the ways in which this decision  
8 that you so quickly came to would be disastrous  
9 today. I plan to go a little bit more in-depth  
10 about that.

11 So the poverty rate, as it stands  
12 now, numbers of 2020 show that we have well over a  
13 million people who fall on under that poverty rate.  
14 As a matter of fact, going along with that and kind  
15 of, you know, going over that, in the last quarter  
16 of 2020, it was reported that 31 percent of all  
17 households in Illinois were at risk for evictions.

18 I mean, granted, some things have  
19 changed, not too many things have changed. A COVID  
20 spike has come about, and the CDC decided to up  
21 those protections. Rightfully so, but within those  
22 numbers, there is something that's particularly



1 telling that when you look at the people who are in  
2 the poverty line or under it, a good percentage of  
3 those people are people of color. And in this  
4 year, and as 2020 has been, in the wake of George  
5 Floyd's murderer being on trial, we find that  
6 racial relations have been at the forefront of our  
7 society, and is, again, the same case today.

8           What my hope is, is that you take  
9 a stand today. That is just as the good book, and  
10 I always preached, to be a good neighbor, but maybe  
11 it's too late for that because without  
12 consideration of all of the facts and all of the  
13 things that were told to you in the last meeting,  
14 you callously decided that profit was worth more  
15 than people.

16           This is something that won't be  
17 forgotten, and I'm not particularly sure how would  
18 one sleep at night knowing this. As a matter of  
19 fact, I'm running on fumes right now because it's  
20 been hard for me to sleep when I think about the  
21 amount of people that are going to get sick, that  
22 are going to die, the crime that is linked to this.

1 It's a shameful, shameful situation.

2 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Mr. Pratt.  
3 That's your time. Thank you.

4 Mr. Benjamin Theobald?

5 MR. THEOBALD: Yes. I'm sorry. Can you  
6 hear me?

7 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you.  
8 Please state and spell your name and then you may  
9 begin.

10 MR. THEOBALD: Yes. My name is Benjamin  
11 Theobald. My first name is B-E-N-J-A-M-I-N, last  
12 name Theobald, T-H-E-O-B-A-L-D. I am speaking as a  
13 representative of the Champaign-Urbana Democratic  
14 Socialists of America.

15 I am here to once again ask that  
16 you extend the moratorium on utilities and prevent  
17 any more utility shutoffs. I understand that  
18 there are programs such as LIHEAP and H2O Help, but  
19 if you look at the data, last year, in the fiscal  
20 year of 2020, there were 70,000 less households  
21 that received LIHEAP relative to the previous year,  
22 fiscal year in 2019, despite the increased need to

1 the pandemic's economic impact.

2           Some of these protections that  
3 were adopted in September 22 in terms of the LIHEAP  
4 where people were told that they needed -- if they  
5 needed help with their -- it was hard to explain  
6 why people should apply for LIHEAP when they needed  
7 help with their water bill. Unfortunately, there's  
8 been a lack of information, a lack of transparency,  
9 and a lot of people are having trouble right now  
10 finding the right information and finding the right  
11 aid to apply for.

12           As I said in the last meeting, I  
13 spoke to a young mother, specifically a young  
14 mother with a one-year-old and a two-year-old. Her  
15 water company told her that she needed to pay her  
16 water bill, and, you know, she fell behind because  
17 of the pandemic, and she eventually ended up with  
18 having to call the Salvation Army, who -- which  
19 gave -- maybe offered her a few hundred dollars.  
20 What I find, you know, in this past year what I  
21 find so frustrating and so disheartening is that  
22 there seems to be just a lack of accountability

1 from anyone who wants -- and a lack of compassion.

2 I know there's a mother, or a  
3 woman, I believe she was a mother, too, in  
4 Carbondale, who was told by the water department  
5 that her browser was out-of-date and that when she  
6 tried to pay her bill, there was nothing they could  
7 do. So this is a woman -- and then -- who -- to  
8 add insult to injury, was a Native American woman  
9 who was sitting in her house. She was dealing --  
10 and was dealing with COVID and it seemed that  
11 nobody wanted to take any accountability, any  
12 responsibility.

13 You know, it's hard to believe  
14 that, you know, in 2010 the United Nations General  
15 Assembly adopted a resolution affirming that water  
16 is a human right. Clean drinking water is a human  
17 right. But here in the United States of America,  
18 it's a commodity. You know --

19 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you,  
20 Mr. Theobald.

21 MR. THEOBALD: So thank you very much. I  
22 thank you.

1 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Ira Dawson?

2 MR. DAWSON: Hi. Can you hear me?

3 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: I can hear you.

4 MR. DAWSON: Okay. My name is Ira Dawson.  
5 That's I-R-A D-A-W-S-O-N.

6 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: You may proceed,  
7 Mr. Dawson.

8 MR. DAWSON: So today I wanted to come here  
9 -- I appreciate the time. I appreciate having this  
10 venue to speak and I wanted to hit on Ameren,  
11 specifically, because not only that's personal for  
12 me, that's my provider and this is a personal  
13 issue.

14 And so without being too boring,  
15 statistics -- Ameren put all these statements out  
16 on their own website and so they can be  
17 fact-checked.

18 In Quarter 1 of 2020, they saw a  
19 36 percent increase in profit. Quarter 2, their  
20 shares went from \$0.72 since 2019 to \$0.98.  
21 Quarter 3, they stayed \$1.47 compared to both  
22 years. And then Quarter 4, they ended at \$3.50 a

1 share from 3.35.

2 So what I want to bring to the  
3 table here is, who are the ones that are struggling  
4 and who are the ones that are having record  
5 profits? And the decision that has been made, who  
6 is that benefiting?

7 And that's really a rhetorical  
8 question because I think anybody out there knows  
9 the answer to who this is benefiting right now, and  
10 unfortunately, it is not the citizens of Illinois,  
11 and it is not the people. And so the citizens only  
12 received 3,200 or \$9.80 a day in 2020. So that's  
13 what we have. And then we have a company who is  
14 having record profits.

15 And so \$10 a day versus record  
16 profits -- again, what has this decision been --  
17 who has this decision been made for, and who was it  
18 to benefit?

19 Again, rhetorical question because  
20 the answer is obvious. My main question is, why  
21 are we focusing on profits over people? Why do we  
22 see money being more important than someone's

1 well-being or their health?

2                   And so you can't live a normal  
3 life without utilities. You have to have that.  
4 And so by taking that away, it's just one more  
5 thing that is being added to the citizens of  
6 Illinois' list of things that they have to  
7 overcome.

8                   Basically, I want to ask, have a  
9 heart. Have a heart, and make a decision that  
10 isn't just bottom-line based. I ask you to be  
11 understanding and think outside of the bubble of,  
12 you know, these meetings. Do what's right. I ask  
13 you to do what's right because I think every person  
14 listening to me right now knows what the right  
15 decision is, and I think that it's important to  
16 lead us in a way that you show us that you care.

17                   Because at this point, I don't  
18 think -- or I get the vibe that, you know, it  
19 doesn't matter. Bottom line matters. Ameren's  
20 profit matters. Profit over people. Profit over  
21 people. These are kind of rhetorical questions  
22 because the answers are obvious. I think we both

1 know -- everyone knows on this call, how that is.  
2 And so thank you so much for your time and I  
3 appreciate it.

4 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Nicholis  
5 Hall?

6 MR. HALL: Yes, I'm here.

7 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Hall.  
8 Please state and spell your name, and then you may  
9 begin.

10 MR. HALL: Hi. My name is Nicholis Hall.  
11 That is N-I-C-H-O-L-I-S. Hall, H-A-L-L. I am here  
12 today representing Progressives of Pekin, Illinois.

13 So what I'm here today to say is,  
14 water is extremely important to public health  
15 initiatives. Even with protections in place, there  
16 have been over 10,000 water disconnections in  
17 Illinois since October. Cities in Illinois that  
18 have prohibited water shutoffs have resumed, but  
19 we're still in the middle of a pandemic and yet  
20 this public body voted to allow utility shutoffs to  
21 resume, including water shutoffs, which will make  
22 things much worse and without relief for the



1 families currently behind on their utility bills in  
2 place.

3           Once these resume, people will be  
4 unable to practice an essential public health  
5 action in their homes, one that is not only  
6 essential for the prevention of the spread of  
7 COVID-19 but also things like chronic diarrhea and  
8 hepatitis-A. People will be unable to wash their  
9 hands.

10           By ending the utility shutoffs,  
11 you're going to worsen the health of regular  
12 people. Things like shigellosis, acute dysentery,  
13 giardiasis, as well as campylobacter infections,  
14 which affect the intestines we're seeing in places  
15 like Michigan when they resumed utility shutoffs.

16           People need relief from the  
17 pandemic, not another health concern to worry  
18 about, especially when employers are requiring  
19 their employees to take two weeks off to  
20 quarantine, even with a negative COVID test at the  
21 first sign of any symptom of being sick.

22           People are afraid, but people need

1 immediate utility bill relief, not mean-tested  
2 policies that force them to jump through seven  
3 layers of bureaucracy to receive a measly percent  
4 of what they're being charged by these utility  
5 companies. Do not put profits of a few utility  
6 company execs before public health.

7 Please do the right thing and  
8 reinstate the moratorium on utility shutoffs.  
9 There's clear evidence that when people go without  
10 water, they get sick and they die. Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Arthur  
12 Paganini?

13 MR. PAGANINI: Yeah. Hi. Can you hear me?

14 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you. Go  
15 ahead, Mr. Paganini, please state and spell your  
16 name, then you may proceed.

17 MR. PAGANINI: Okay. My name is Arthur  
18 Paganini, that's spelled A-R-T-H-U-R  
19 P-A-G-A-N-I-N-I. All right. Hi. Thanks for your  
20 time.

21 I'm representing the Party for  
22 Socialism and Liberation in Champaign-Urbana, and

1 I'm here to ask that the ICC extend the moratorium  
2 on utility shutoffs until the pandemic is under  
3 control for everyone and people can resume their  
4 lives normally.

5 I'm going to talk about Illinois  
6 American Water. Let me read their posted increases  
7 in profits per share from 2019 to 2020.  
8 Second-quarter, at the peak of Illinois's  
9 unemployment crisis, 3.2 percent. Third quarter,  
10 2019 to 2020, 9.8 percent. Fourth quarter, 2019 to  
11 2020, fully including the start of water shutoffs  
12 in Illinois, 48 percent.

13 If these companies were losing  
14 money, that would be one thing. The State can  
15 negotiate a bailout or pursue other options.  
16 Denying people access to their basic needs is not  
17 just unnecessary, it's cruel. But Illinois  
18 American Water and these other corporations are not  
19 losing money or breaking even, they're profiting,  
20 and their profits are growing. It's obvious that  
21 they care more about their individual gain than the  
22 well-being of real people, real families here in

1 this state.

2           Throughout the pandemic, people  
3 have lost their lives, their good health, and their  
4 jobs. As of this morning, Illinois has had  
5 one-and-a-quarter million cases and over 23,000  
6 deaths. At the same time, since September 2020,  
7 over 87,000 households have had either their power  
8 or their water shut off. Those most affected are  
9 working-class families who don't have a backup or  
10 any substantial savings.

11           At such a critical period,  
12 corporations who are profiting this much should not  
13 be looking to profit even more. Is facing COVID  
14 not enough? Do these families also have to worry  
15 about not having running water or keeping the  
16 lights on?

17           By allowing shutoffs to happen,  
18 the state government is endorsing this behavior and  
19 is responsible for the suffering of those affected.  
20 It is unacceptable for an institution that claims  
21 to represent the needs of its people to allow this  
22 to happen. The fact that several of us from

1 different organizations spanning the state are here  
2 in solidarity with the people of Illinois, while  
3 politicians and executives stuff their pockets,  
4 should say everything there is to say about the  
5 situation we're in.

6                   Once again, I'm asking the  
7 Illinois Commerce Commission to extend the  
8 moratorium on utility shutoffs. Thank you for  
9 your time.

10                   CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you,  
11 Mr. Paganini. Next, Anthony Stephens.

12                   MR. STEPHENS: Yes. I'm here.

13                   CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Okay. Mr. Stephens,  
14 please state and spell your name, then you may  
15 begin.

16                   MR. STEPHENS: Thank you. My name is  
17 Anthony Stephens. That's A-N-T-H-O-N-Y  
18 S-T-E-P-H-E-N-S. I would like to start by thanking  
19 the commissioners for the opportunity to speak on  
20 this important issue.

21                   I've been the executive director  
22 of Jacksonville UNITE for just over 12 years. We

1 are a community organization that assists people  
2 with issues regarding homelessness, hunger or  
3 poverty, and disfranchisement. We mainly operate  
4 in Morgan County, Illinois, although with issues  
5 like this, we tend to reach out, on a state level,  
6 issues that affect us here in Morgan County.

7 As a non-profit, I can tell you,  
8 in speaking with other executive directors and  
9 board members of other non-profits in our  
10 communities, like United Way, like, you know, Boys  
11 & Girls Club, Big Brother, Big Sister, etc.

12 Non-profits and community organizations simply  
13 cannot continue to absorb these burdens. Many have  
14 told me they will have exhausted their funds before  
15 the end of 2021, which will ultimately, drastically  
16 affect the services they can provide to our  
17 community that they serve in the years going  
18 forward. So not just this year, but in the years  
19 coming up.

20 These organizations that help with  
21 other things have been having to focus the majority  
22 of their time and money and resources on electric

1 bills, utility bills, etc. And as I said before,  
2 it's just simply not something that we can continue  
3 to do. This will drastically affect the  
4 communities that they serve in years going forward  
5 and we cannot afford to absorb these costs anymore.

6           The City of Jacksonville in Morgan  
7 County has never abided by the shutoff moratorium  
8 for water services and has been shutting people's  
9 water off during the pandemic without recourse. In  
10 regards to electricity, Ameren payment arrangements  
11 are set up so that if you make a payment  
12 arrangement and you miss one payment, the entire  
13 bill will come due immediately. So while they may  
14 not be shut off this month or next month, whatever  
15 decision you make today may get them shut off in  
16 three or four months from now, when COVID starts to  
17 spike.

18           It's already started to spike  
19 again. And on a side note, many electric  
20 cooperatives, like Menard Electric in my area, in  
21 Saint Petersburg, Illinois, that mainly serve rural  
22 areas of the state, have never abided by the

1 moratoriums because they said it doesn't apply to  
2 electric cooperatives.

3           And even if every single dollar of  
4 available funding were utilized and even if every  
5 single person knew about it, applied for it, and  
6 were approved for it, that funding will still not  
7 be able to cover the cost of all the past-due  
8 bills. I urge you to extend the utility shutoff  
9 moratorium until a better solution can be resolved  
10 and adequately implemented.

11           Thank you for your time and  
12 consideration in this matter, and I yield back the  
13 balance of my time.

14           CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Jessica  
15 Motsinger? Jessica Motsinger? I don't see  
16 Ms. Motsinger logged in.

17                           (No verbal response.)

18           CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Dat Hong Luu?  
19 Mr. Luu?

20           MR. LUU: I'm here.

21           CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Mr. Luu, please state  
22 and spell your name, then you may proceed.



1           MR. LUU: My name is Dat Hong Luu, D-A-T  
2 H-O-N-G L-U-U. I'm a student speaking today on  
3 behalf of the University of Illinois at  
4 Urbana-Champaign, Young Democratic Socialists of  
5 America. I wish to bring up a rapidly emerging  
6 development to the COVID crisis that must be  
7 addressed immediately in the form of an extension  
8 of utility shutoff moratorium.

9                       Folks here may have heard about  
10 the B117 strain of the coronavirus. That strain is  
11 more infectious and lethal than what the U.S. has  
12 experienced thus far. This strain is expected to  
13 be the dominant strain of COVID in the entirety of  
14 the United States, according to a press release by  
15 the White House just yesterday, by CDC director  
16 Dr. Rochelle Walensky.

17                      Some of you may have heard about  
18 the success of U of I at Urbana-Champaign's testing  
19 system. Already this constant and consistent COVID  
20 testing is revealing a trend of more than 50  
21 percent of new cases on the campus are B117  
22 variants. Most of those cases are coming from

1 those who are outside of Champaign-Urbana coming  
2 into the area from other parts of Illinois.

3 It is a canary in a coal mine as  
4 to what Illinois will be facing, as reported by Joe  
5 Mahr of the Chicago Tribune. As of yesterday, the  
6 31st of March, the public health administrator of  
7 Champaign County, Julie Pryde, reported that 50  
8 percent of all local cases in the county are of the  
9 B117 variance. This is information that is more  
10 current than the last update of the Illinois  
11 Department of Health website on COVID variance on  
12 the 30th of March.

13 The resurgence of this crisis in  
14 Illinois will only intensify faster than we think.  
15 I beg the Commission to understand the severity of  
16 the situation and take the appropriate action  
17 before it's too late. Illinois must extend the  
18 utility shutoff moratorium and to not do so is to  
19 condemn thousands more to die. Thank you.

20 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Abigail  
21 Buckholtz? Abigail Buckholtz? I don't see  
22 Ms. Buckholtz.

1 (No verbal response.)

2 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Kyle Auer?

3 MR. AUER: Yeah. Can you hear me?

4 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you.

5 MR. AUER: Okay. My name is Kyle Auer,

6 K-Y-L-E A-U-E-R. Okay. Thank you for allowing me

7 to speak today. I am speaking today as a student

8 at Illinois State University and as a member of the

9 Peoria Democratic Socialists of America.

10 Today could be considered a  
11 turning point regarding utility shutoffs. As a  
12 student of Illinois State University, I know the  
13 struggles that many students have had during these  
14 semesters in the pandemic.

15 The large amounts of people who  
16 have been unemployed, evicted, have had utilities  
17 shut off all over the state is staggering, to say  
18 the least. I don't understand why this is even a  
19 debate, at this point.

20 Students, as well as parents, have  
21 said that -- I mean, they have to think about  
22 enough already. Right? Like, during a regular

1 semester alone, not to mention during a pandemic.  
2 Finances are among the most important issues that  
3 they have to deal with on a semester-to-semester  
4 basis.

5 Do you even understand what  
6 students, teachers, faculty, and family members  
7 have had to deal with during this pandemic?  
8 Postponing the shutoffs to utilities would be so  
9 beneficial. It will relieve stress for so many.

10 I, personally, am a lower-income  
11 student, so I feel like, you know, if there are a  
12 lot of stipulations with insurance, a lot of  
13 stipulations with finances during the pandemic when  
14 not everyone is able to work, when people are  
15 losing their jobs, when people are dying, people  
16 are going to the hospital. I don't feel like this  
17 is the right path to go. I really don't see any  
18 benefits from this, only a lot more complications  
19 of issues with the State of Illinois.

20 And as my comrades have said, this is  
21 dangerous and I hope that you do the right thing.  
22 Extend the moratorium. I yield the rest of my

1 time.

2 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. Helena  
3 Duncan?

4 MS. DUNCAN: Yes. Can you hear me?

5 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you.

6 MS. DUNCAN: Hi. My name is Helena Duncan.  
7 It's spelled H-E-L-E-N-A D-U-N-C-A-N, and I live in  
8 Woodlawn on the south side of Chicago.

9 When I read that utility shutoffs  
10 would be resuming this week, I was astounded. The  
11 purpose of your Commission updated on your website  
12 is, "To protect the public and to ensure that  
13 public utility services are adequate, reliable, and  
14 safe."

15 That utility shutoffs could  
16 resume during a deadly pandemic would be a clear  
17 abdication of these duties. The news report that  
18 I read about this, on ABC 7, quoted Chairwoman  
19 Zalewski as telling the public that they should  
20 negotiate with their utility provider if they fall  
21 behind, or apply for assistance, stating, "It is  
22 important to note the bill payment assistance

1 program is a finite fund, so it runs out soon, so  
2 call soon."

3 A finite fund that could run out  
4 soon is not an adequate response during a public  
5 health crisis. Means-tested aid that relies on  
6 income level and other qualifying factors is not an  
7 adequate response during a public health crisis.  
8 The moratorium must continue.

9 When I was looking into this  
10 issue, I found another news report from September  
11 of last year in which Chairwoman Zalewski stated  
12 that, "Illinois citizens are facing extraordinary  
13 challenges due to the pandemic. Low-income  
14 families and those impacted by COVID-19 should not  
15 have to fear losing basic services like electric,  
16 heat, or fresh water."

17 I wonder what has changed between  
18 September and now? Why is it now acceptable for  
19 low-income families and those impacted by this  
20 virus to fear losing basic services? Why is that  
21 fear okay now? We are experiencing an uptick in  
22 COVID cases here in Chicago. Why is the idea of

1     endangering people acceptable right now?

2                     Perhaps it's not that the morality  
3     of this issue has changed, but that the utility  
4     companies, which still amass huge profits  
5     throughout all of this, are fed up with any threat  
6     to their bottom line.

7                     I should not have to beg on behalf  
8     of my community, my neighbors, for this Commission  
9     to put our interests above those of these  
10    corporations. My neighbors who don't speak English  
11    as the first language will struggle to negotiate or  
12    apply for assistance. That my neighbors with  
13    children who are trying to learn at home, or stay  
14    safe at home, might find themselves in  
15    uninhabitable conditions in their own homes is  
16    enraging. It cannot be allowed.

17                    Extend the utility shutoff  
18    moratorium for the health, safety, and dignity of  
19    the residents who entrust you with these duties.  
20    Thank you.

21                    CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you, Ms. Duncan.  
22    Next Michael Stephens?

1 MR. STEPHENS: Yeah. Can you hear me?

2 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you.

3 MR. STEPHENS: Okay. My name is Michael  
4 Stephens, spelled M-I-C-H-A-E-L, Stephens,  
5 S-T-E-P-H-E-N-S. I'm speaking today on part of the  
6 Christian County DSA. I'd like to use my time to  
7 ask you to continue a moratorium on utility  
8 shutoffs for those who cannot pay.

9 Reinstating utility shutoffs is a  
10 clear case of putting profit of a few corporations  
11 above the need of human beings. The pandemic has  
12 affected everyone in our society, but it has not  
13 had a worse impact on anyone more than those  
14 already living below the poverty line.

15 According to the Center on Budget  
16 and Policy Priorities, from February 2020 to  
17 February 2021, there was an 11 percent drop in  
18 low-wage jobs. Additionally, 11 percent of  
19 Illinois households report not having enough to  
20 eat. This number raises to 17 percent when you  
21 look at households that have children. At a time  
22 when so many people are having trouble making ends



1 meet, it is criminal to not provide relief. As  
2 others have said, the utility companies have  
3 continued making money even as those who have the  
4 least lose even more.

5 It is not acceptable to me that in  
6 the wealthiest country --

7 THE COURT REPORTER: Sorry. This is the  
8 court reporter. Excuse me? Mr. Stephens, I lost  
9 you.

10 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Mr. Stephens, just  
11 hold on for a second. Mr. Stephens, yeah, I think  
12 if you could go back and say the last three  
13 sentences.

14 Mr. Court Reporter, does that sound  
15 right?

16 THE COURT REPORTER: That's about right.  
17 Yes.

18 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: You know what, how  
19 about this? Let the Court Reporter say what he  
20 last captured and then you can pick up from there,  
21 if that's okay?

22 MR. STEPHENS: Okay. That works.

1 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Mr. Court Reporter, do  
2 you know what he last said?

3 THE COURT REPORTER: Yes. So it was about  
4 -- you said, "In a country like the United  
5 States" --

6 MR. STEPHENS: Yeah. It is unacceptable to  
7 me that in the wealthiest country on earth we are  
8 allowing thousands to go without basic needs, even  
9 in the midst of a global pandemic. I just ask that  
10 you please continue the moratorium on utility  
11 shutoffs. I yield the -- (Inaudible.)

12 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Okay. I think you  
13 were going to say you yield the remainder of your  
14 time.

15 MR. STEPHENS: Yes.

16 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Okay. Thank you.  
17 Next, Melinda Hilker?

18 MS. HILKER: Hi. Yes. Can you hear me?

19 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you.

20 MR. HILKER: Okay. My name is Melinda  
21 Hilker. It's M-E-L-I-N-D-A, Hilker, H-I-L-K-E-R.  
22 Hello. I'd like to thank all of you for allowing

1 me to speak today. My name is Melinda Hilker. I'm  
2 representing Southern Illinois DSA, but more than  
3 anything, I'm representing -- I am a low-income  
4 earner. I am a teacher's aide. I'm a current  
5 student, I'm a mother and I'm an advocate for the  
6 marginal voices in Illinois.

7 I have always been someone who  
8 helps my neighbors, help them get through these  
9 life applications which can be complicated and  
10 tiresome, to say the least. I've been there.

11 I've had those experiences where I  
12 feared that truck pulling up because, oh my God,  
13 could that be the next time that I lose my  
14 utilities? Could that be the moment that I have to  
15 figure out a whole new plan for my family? You  
16 know, will I be able to cook dinner that night?

17 These fears become overwhelming  
18 and paralyzing when you're in these states, and you  
19 -- unless you are in it, unless you have felt that  
20 desperation, you have no idea what it feels like to  
21 not be certain if you will have custody of your  
22 children by the end of the month because if you get

1 evicted in the State of Illinois, you can lose your  
2 children.

3           And that is, absolutely, a  
4 possibility for parents across Illinois right now,  
5 as this moratorium is lifted yesterday, we now have  
6 people across this state who are gasping for  
7 desperation because they are so impacted by so many  
8 of the elements that have happened within COVID.

9           Luckily, I'm one of those people  
10 that have computer access. Luckily, I'm one of  
11 those people that I didn't get my utility shut off.  
12 Luckily, I'm one of those people that have a  
13 savings account. Luckily, I'm one of those  
14 privileged, and I'm assuming, most of you that are  
15 on here are -- you are also one of those  
16 privileged, lucky ones.

17           But luck should not be determining  
18 the fate of how we are determining the equation.  
19 It should not be that we have to look at, "Oh, this  
20 part of the equation as well. These companies need  
21 to make profit." We need to make sure that we're  
22 looking at it through an empathetic, analytical

1 lens, through mathematics and probability.

2 Are people going to lose their  
3 utilities? Yes. Are people going to lose their  
4 homes? Yes. Can people lose their children? Yes.  
5 And I beg all of you to please continue this  
6 moratorium and protect the vulnerable people  
7 throughout southern Illinois and Illinois in  
8 general. Thank you.

9 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you. David Max  
10 Axelrod?

11 MR. AXELROD: I think the name is Allan Max  
12 Axelrod, unless if we're having a surprise guest.

13 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: No. I apologize. I  
14 apologize, Mr. Axelrod. It's you. I'm sorry.

15 MR. AXELROD: Okay. And I apologize, I'm  
16 having computer trouble. I don't know that my  
17 audio will hold up throughout, so please let me  
18 know if that's the case.

19 Name, Allan Max Axelrod, spelled  
20 A-L-L-A-N M-A-X A-X-E-L-R-O-D. I'm the campaign  
21 lead of No Ameren Shutoffs, the zero dollar  
22 all-volunteer group of 51 member organizations and

1 counting, spanning the state north and south, east  
2 and west.

3           We aren't here recreationally.  
4 And you all know the data, such as within two weeks  
5 of the September utility shutoffs happening, we  
6 had over 2,000 cases a day, which we already have  
7 worse than that now. Within three weeks, we had  
8 over 3,000 cases a day, within four weeks, over  
9 4,000 cases a day, within a month and four days, we  
10 were at over 6,000 cases a day, all before  
11 Halloween and all before the election.

12           But perhaps that's not enough.  
13 Perhaps the story of a single mother in Champaign,  
14 separate from the story that Ben Theobald told you  
15 is of note because we asked her how utility  
16 shutoffs affected her and her answer was simple.  
17 "I've had to separate and give away my children."

18           On top of the fact that that's  
19 grossly inhumane, it is not safe during a pandemic.  
20 This can be sourced all the way from the 2007  
21 Congressional Research Services Pandemic Influenza  
22 and Analysis of State Preparedness and Response

1 Plan. And one of the things that's really  
2 important to note about this whole situation is  
3 that the debt relief is not going to come en masse  
4 from simply helping Illinoisans to refinance, which  
5 is what your reopen plan amounts to.

6           There is a House bill, HB 2877,  
7 that since the last time we spoke to you, passed  
8 through the House, and it doesn't have just one  
9 state senator sponsoring it, not just two, not just  
10 three, but seven, including two from central  
11 Illinois and the majority whip that would provide  
12 direct payments sourced from the Trump and  
13 McConnell administration using federal dollars to  
14 rent end utility providers. The utility  
15 corporations are going to get their money.

16           But perhaps the decisions made by  
17 this body are to keep politicians comfortable. So  
18 let's discuss, for a moment, just how  
19 inconvenienced they were last time, and what  
20 devastating effect this could have on the State of  
21 Illinois.

22           Last time, within a week of

1 utility shutoffs happening, the Sangamon County  
2 Health District actually showed a huge spike in  
3 their COVID cases, a huge spike in their positivity  
4 rate. And the Illinois General Assembly was shut  
5 down for the fall veto session. If that happens  
6 again in the spring legislative session, you're not  
7 going to just make it harder for Illinoisans to  
8 catch up on their rent and utility debt, but you  
9 are going to doom all the other hard-fought pieces  
10 of legislation that the politicians, who you may be  
11 trying to keep comfortable, are fighting for, too.

12 Please do what's right for the  
13 State of Illinois and keep the protections that we  
14 once had in place to avoid a repeat of catastrophe  
15 that we have seen in Tennessee, that we have seen  
16 in Indiana, that we have seen in West Virginia.  
17 Don't do it.

18 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you,  
19 Mr. Axelrod. Finally, Mr. Luke Lee?

20 MR. LEE: Hello. Can you hear me?

21 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: We can hear you.

22 MR. LEE: Great. My name is Luke Lee.



1 That's L-U-K-E L-E-E. I am a resident of Champaign  
2 County, and today I am representing myself.

3 I'm here today to ask the ICC to  
4 extend the moratorium on utility shutoffs in all  
5 of Illinois until the direct effects of the  
6 pandemic are sufficiently curtailed and until  
7 everyone in the state can resume their lives  
8 normally.

9 According to an LA Times article  
10 from March 23 of this year, millions of U.S.  
11 households are facing heavy past-due utility bills  
12 which have escalated in the year since the COVID-19  
13 pandemic forced Americans to hunker down at home to  
14 consume more power. As a result, nearly one-third  
15 of U.S. households will soon have to reckon with  
16 their overdue power bill at a time when many of  
17 them are struggling with lost jobs or income.

18 Though the economy has achieved  
19 considerable gains in recent months, about 9.5  
20 million jobs remain lost. And many people have  
21 lost income even while remaining employed, leaving  
22 them unable to buy food, pay rent, or afford

1 utility bills. On top of that, a team of Duke  
2 University researchers have found that policies  
3 that helped financially struggling Americans stay  
4 in their homes and keep access to water and  
5 electricity during the COVID-19 pandemic also  
6 helped reduce the spread of the virus.

7           The result found -- or their  
8 research found that the eviction moratorium and  
9 relief from utility disconnections reduced COVID-19  
10 cases by 8.2 percent from the onset of the pandemic  
11 through the end of November 2020. Utility  
12 moratoriums have varied widely in duration and  
13 scope and are often introduced late in the  
14 pandemic. The study found that if a utility  
15 shutoff moratorium had been enacted on March the  
16 1st of 2020, it would have cut infections by 8.7  
17 percent and deaths by 14.8 percent.

18           I believe what we've been talking  
19 about today is a deeply moral and ethical issue.  
20 I'm thinking about so many people's stories today  
21 whenever I say this -- we cannot put profit over  
22 the Illinois people. Water is a human right.

1 People's physical health, ability to find new  
2 housing, and often their literal lives are hanging  
3 in the balance right now.

4                   Once again, I ask that the  
5 statewide utility shutoff moratorium be extended  
6 until it is safe for people to live normally again.  
7 Thank you for your time.

8           CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you.

9           MR. GIRDLER: Hi. My name was read at the  
10 beginning, but I wasn't called to actually speak.

11           CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: I'm sorry. What's  
12 your name?

13           MR. GIRDLER: Marc Girdler.

14           CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: I apologize. Okay.  
15 Go ahead, Mr. Girdler.

16           MR. GIRDLER: Thank you. My name is Marc  
17 Girdler, M-A-R-C G-I-R-D-L-E-R. And I am here as a  
18 member of both the Bloomington-Normal and Decatur  
19 Club of the Communist Party. First of all, I want  
20 to thank you for not only extending the time for  
21 speaking today back to its original state, but for  
22 giving back the extra minute so that we have three

1 minutes. Sometimes just knowing that you're  
2 willing to listen can make a difference in how  
3 people view public body.

4 Obviously, I'm here to advocate  
5 for extending the shutoff moratoriums, even though  
6 there's help available. As I stated last time I  
7 spoke here that it's very difficult to get that  
8 help in ideal time, let alone, you know, now.

9 The issue is that a lot of these  
10 offices are in remote working right now, which  
11 means caseworkers are not at the office with access  
12 to everything. This has -- by their own admission,  
13 has led to a lot of people's calls, the follow-up  
14 calls, being lost. You can't rely on the mail.

15 The United States Postal Service  
16 is in a severe decline under the mismanagement of  
17 bootlicker Louis DeJoy, and this means the  
18 letters are not reaching people. These are  
19 re-certification letters, these are shutoff  
20 notices, these are payment agreement plans that are  
21 never arriving because of problems caused by both  
22 government mismanagement and the pandemic.

1                   So even though we -- you can get  
2 help, it's very difficult. And again, sometimes  
3 you have to really navigate some labyrinthine  
4 bureaucracy to get any help in a perfect time. You  
5 know, if you want your water shutoff to be, you  
6 know, turned down and maybe you have to have apply  
7 for LIHEAP. And maybe you didn't know that, maybe  
8 your municipality doesn't know that.

9                   So all these things are issues  
10 when all we should really be doing is worrying  
11 about how to help people get through this pandemic.  
12 If you stand idly by while these corporations toy  
13 with people's lives, at a certain point, you're  
14 going to be viewed as complicit, and as we're told  
15 over and over again, this is a once-in-a-lifetime  
16 pandemic, but you have a once-in-a-lifetime  
17 opportunity to prove that you are not, as it was so  
18 eloquently stated earlier, "ghouls who delight on  
19 the torment of the poor."

20                   That's not the reputation that I  
21 would want. I would want to stand with the people  
22 of Illinois, not with these corporations who are

1 already profiting through the roof at the expense  
2 of the poor and the working class. Thank you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Thank you,  
4 Mr. Girdler. Okay. This concludes our requests to  
5 speak. So we are going to go ahead and move on  
6 with the agenda.

7 We're moving on to our Public  
8 Utilities Agenda.

9 There are edits to the March 4,  
10 2021, Regular Open Meeting Minutes. Are there any  
11 objections to approving minutes as edited?

12 (No verbal response.)

13 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
14 minutes are approved.

15 Under our Electric Items, Item E-1  
16 concerns the Commission Staff to reliability  
17 assessment of ComEd for 2019.

18 Each year, electric utilities file  
19 with the Commission their Annual Reliability  
20 Reports pursuant to Part 411 of the Commission  
21 Rules. The Staff annually reviews these utility  
22 reports and reliability performance according to

1 the criteria of Sections 411.140. Staff also  
2 performs field inspections of each utility's  
3 electric distribution facilities. The report that  
4 is now before us reviews ComEd's performance under  
5 the criteria prescribed by Part 411 and recommends  
6 actions that ComEd could undertake to improve  
7 system reliability.

8 The order adopts the report and  
9 directs that it is made part of the record of this  
10 proceeding. Are there any objections to approving  
11 the order?

12 (No verbal response.)

13 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
14 order is approved.

15 Item E-2 concerns a show cause  
16 proceeding against Entrust Energy who operates as  
17 an alternative electric retail supplier in  
18 Illinois. PJM notified the Commission staff that  
19 Entrust Energy was in default and that it had  
20 terminated Entrust Energy's rights to transact  
21 business in PJM's market.

22 Staff recommends that the

1 Commission open its proceeding and rescind  
2 Entrust's certificate unless the company  
3 demonstrates that it still maintains an RTO  
4 membership in good standing and purchases 100  
5 percent of its physical electric energy from the  
6 RTOs.

7                   The Commission accepts Staff's  
8 recommendation and the order rescinds the  
9 certificate, effective 30 days from the date of the  
10 order and opens this proceeding to allow Entrust  
11 Energy to show cause why its certificate should not  
12 be rescinded. Are any objections to approving the  
13 order?

14                   (No verbal response.)

15                   CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
16 order is approved.

17                   Items E3 and E4 concern citations  
18 for failure to comply with Part 454 of the  
19 Commission Rules. In both proceedings, Staff  
20 motioned to dismiss the proceedings, stating that  
21 all issues raised by the Commission have been  
22 resolved. Are any objections to considering these



1 items together and granting both motions to  
2 dismiss?

3 (No verbal response.)

4 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
5 motions to dismiss are granted.

6 Items E5 through E11 concern  
7 citations for failure to file compliance  
8 re-certification reports as required by Part 454 of  
9 the Commission Rules. Respondents failed to appear  
10 at the hearings. The orders disband Respondent's  
11 Certificate of Service Authority to operate as  
12 agents, brokers, and consultants for two years.  
13 Are there any objections to considering these items  
14 together and approving the orders?

15 (No verbal response.)

16 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
17 orders are approved.

18 Items E-12 and E-13 concern  
19 citations for failure to file compliance  
20 re-certification reports as required by Part 454 of  
21 the Commission Rules. The Respondents also lacked  
22 authority to transact business in Illinois.

1 Respondents failed to appear at the hearing. The  
2 orders revoke Respondent's Certificate of Service  
3 Authority to operate as agents, brokers, and  
4 consultants. Are there any objections to  
5 considering these items together and approving the  
6 orders?

7 (No verbal response.)

8 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
9 orders are approved.

10 Items E-14 though E-21 concern  
11 requests for proprietary treatment of information  
12 in the Petitioner's reports. The orders grant the  
13 protection, finding that the information is highly  
14 proprietary and confidential. Are there any  
15 objections to considering these items together and  
16 approving the orders?

17 (No verbal response.)

18 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
19 orders are approved.

20 Item E-22 concerns ComEd's  
21 reconciliation of revenues billed under Rider ZEA,  
22 for Zero Emission Adjustments for the period of

1 June 1, 2019, through May 31, 2020. The order  
2 approves reconciliation as reflected in the  
3 appendix to the order, finding that the costs were  
4 prudently inferred. Are there any objections to  
5 approving the order?

6 (No verbal response.)

7 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
8 order is approved.

9 Item E-23 concerns an application  
10 for certification as an installer of distributed  
11 generation facilities in Illinois. The order  
12 grants the certificate, finding that the Applicant  
13 meets the requirements. Are there any objections  
14 to approving the order?

15 (No verbal response.)

16 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
17 order is approved.

18 Item E-24 concerns an application  
19 for certification to install, maintain, or repair  
20 electric vehicle charging station facilities in  
21 Illinois. The order grants the certificate,  
22 finding that the Applicant meets the requirements.

1 Are there any objections to approving the order?

2 (No verbal response.)

3 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
4 order is approved.

5 Item E-25 concerns a petition to  
6 cancel a Certificate of Service Authority to  
7 install distributed generation facilities in  
8 Illinois. Petitioner no longer exists due to a  
9 merger and no longer maintains status as an  
10 installer. The order grants the permission to  
11 cancel the certificate. Are there any objections  
12 to approving the order?

13 (No verbal response.)

14 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
15 order is approved.

16 Items E-26 through E-29 concern  
17 petitions to cancel Certificates of Service  
18 Authority to install energy efficiency measures.  
19 The orders cancel those certificates. Are there  
20 any objections to considering these items together  
21 and approving the orders?

22 (No verbal response.)

1 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
2 orders are approved.

3 Items E-30 through E-38 concern  
4 applications for certifications to install energy  
5 efficiency measures in Illinois. The orders grant  
6 the certificates, findings of the Applicants meet  
7 the requirements. Are there any objections to  
8 considering these items together and approving the  
9 orders?

10 (No verbal response.)

11 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
12 orders are approved.

13 Under our Gas Items, Item G-1 and  
14 G-2, concern North Shore's and Peoples Gas'  
15 reconciliations of revenues collected under the  
16 Coal Tar Riders. The orders approve the  
17 reconciliations as reflected in the appendices to  
18 the orders, finding that the costs were prudently  
19 incurred. Are there any objections to considering  
20 these items together and approving the orders?

21 (No verbal response.)

22 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the

1 orders are approved.

2 Items G-3 through G-6 concern  
3 requests for proprietary treatment of information  
4 in the Petitioner's reports. The orders grant the  
5 protection, finding that the information is highly  
6 proprietary and confidential. Are there any  
7 objections to considering these items together and  
8 approving the orders?

9 (No verbal response.)

10 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
11 orders are approved.

12 G-7 concerns Docket 20-0779, which  
13 is the complaint against People's Gas regarding  
14 alleged overbilling and incorrect meter reading.  
15 The parties filed a stipulation and Joint Motion to  
16 Dismiss, stipulating that all the matters of the  
17 dispute have been resolved and requesting that the  
18 Commission dismiss the complaint with prejudice.  
19 Are there any objections to granting the Motion to  
20 Dismiss?

21 (No verbal response.)

22 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the

1 Motion to Dismiss is granted.

2 Under Telecommunications Items,  
3 Item T-1 concerns an application for a Certificate  
4 to Provide Telecommunications Services. The order  
5 grants the certificate, finding that the applicant  
6 meets the requirements. Are there any objections  
7 to approving the order?

8 (No verbal response.)

9 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
10 order is approved.

11 Item T-2 concerns USCOC's  
12 application for a Certificate to Provide  
13 Telecommunication Services. The application also  
14 seeks cancellation of the certificate issued to  
15 Davenport Cellular due to a merger of Davenport  
16 into USCOC. The order grants the application. Are  
17 there any objections to approving the order?

18 (No verbal response.)

19 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
20 order is approved.

21 Items T-3 through T-6 concern  
22 requests for proprietary treatment of information

1 in the Petitioner's reports. The orders grant the  
2 protection, finding that the information is highly  
3 proprietary and confidential. Are there any  
4 objections to considering these items together and  
5 approving the orders?

6 (No verbal response.)

7 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
8 orders are approved.

9 Item T-7 concerns a petition to  
10 cancel Certificates to Provide Facility-Based Local  
11 and Resold Local and Inner Exchange  
12 Telecommunication Services. Petitioner does not  
13 have any customers in Illinois and Staff concludes  
14 that no public interest will be impacted by this  
15 request. The order grants the petition and cancels  
16 the certificate. Are there any objections to  
17 approving the order?

18 (No verbal response.)

19 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
20 order is approved.

21 Under Water and Sewer Items, Item  
22 W-1 concerns Aqua Illinois' petition to approve a



1 proposed updated affiliated interest agreement with  
2 Aqua Indiana. The order approves the updated  
3 agreement, finding it just, and reasonable, and in  
4 the public interest. Are there any objections to  
5 approving the order?

6 (No verbal response.)

7 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
8 order is approved.

9 Item W-2 concerns Illinois  
10 American Water's petition to approve issuance and  
11 sale of up to \$186.85 million of long-term debt and  
12 related affiliate interests and transaction. The  
13 order notes that there are no contested issues in  
14 this proceeding and finds that the requested  
15 issuance of new debt is reasonable and appropriate,  
16 and should be approved. Are there any objections  
17 to approving the order?

18 (No verbal response.)

19 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
20 order is approved.

21 There are no more Miscellaneous  
22 Items.

1                                   No Petitions for Rehearing.

2                                   Under Other Business, Item 0-1  
3 concerns approval of batches, contracts, and  
4 confirmation under the adjustable block program.

5 Are there any objections to approving the program  
6 administrator's submissions?

7                                   (No verbal response.)

8                   CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
9 submissions are approved.

10                                 Item 0-2 concerns approval of  
11 batches, contracts, and confirmation under the  
12 Illinois Solar For All program. Are there any  
13 objection to approving the program administrator's  
14 submissions?

15                                 (No verbal response.)

16                   CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Hearing none, the  
17 submissions are approved.

18                                 This concludes our Public Utilities  
19 Agenda.

20                                 Judge Teague-Kingsley, do we have  
21 any other matters to come before the Commission  
22 today?

1 THE COURT: No, Madam Chairman.

2 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: Do any Commissioners  
3 have any other business to discuss?

4 (No verbal response.)

5 CHAIRWOMAN ZALEWSKI: I've a couple of  
6 announcements.

7 First, I would like to note that  
8 customers that the ICC regulates are part of the  
9 stipulated agreement that was ordered at last  
10 meeting, namely Ameren Illinois, ComEd, Nicor,  
11 People's Gas, North Shore Gas, Aqua Illinois,  
12 Illinois American Water, and Utility Services of  
13 Illinois.

14 If you receive a disconnection  
15 notice in the upcoming weeks, it encourages you to  
16 act quickly and call your utility. If you call  
17 your utility before being shut off and work out a  
18 deferred payment arrangement with the utility, you  
19 will not be shut off from the service. Also, by  
20 engaging with the utility, you can check to see if  
21 you qualify for a bill payment assistance to reduce  
22 what you owe in arrearages and help enroll in an

1 extended deferred payment arrangement with  
2 qualifications that go as low as 10 percent down  
3 for particular deferred payment arrangements.

4           These are extra consumer  
5 protections laid out in the stipulated agreement,  
6 acknowledging that people are still struggling at  
7 this time, but the most important thing to do is to  
8 call before being disconnected.

9           I'd like to mention a couple of  
10 other resources that are currently available to  
11 customers at this time. First, the Department of  
12 Commerce and Economic Opportunity in partnership  
13 with Governor Pritzker is offering the Help  
14 Illinois Families Initiative, providing home energy  
15 assistance relief to Illinois -- to eligible  
16 customers through the month of May. To learn about  
17 this program or to enroll in the LIHEAP program,  
18 please visit GCO's website. The LIHEAP hotline is  
19 1 (877) 411-WARM, or 9276.

20           Also, the Illinois Commerce  
21 Commission stands ready to assist customers  
22 navigate their options. The ICC has both English

1 and Spanish-speaking customer service counselors  
2 that can help you file a complaint. We're  
3 available Monday through Friday, 8:30 to 5:00. The  
4 number is 1 (800) 524-0795. There are also  
5 additional information on our ICC website at  
6 Illinois -- excuse me, at [ICC.illinois.gov](http://ICC.illinois.gov) under  
7 the consumer's tab. We will be posting a flyer on  
8 our website later today that has all this  
9 information and all of the numbers of the utilities  
10 as a resource.

11                   Second, April is National Safe  
12 Digging Month. To avoid hitting utility lines,  
13 which can be dangerous or result in service  
14 outages, the ICC is reminding all homeowners and  
15 excavators to call 811 at least 48 hours, or two  
16 working days, prior to starting excavation.

17                   And finally, I would like to  
18 welcome my new policy advisor, Jordan Graham, who  
19 started today. Jordan comes with an incredible  
20 background and Tanya and I are grateful to have him  
21 on our team.

22                   Jordan worked as an award-winning

1 journalist for six years in California. He gained  
2 invaluable experience interning at ELPC and Tesla.  
3 Jordan received his B.A. in Economics from the  
4 University of Illinois, go Illini -- his M.S. in  
5 Journalism from Northwestern, and is currently  
6 earning his Masters of Public Policy with a  
7 Certificate in Energy and Environmental Policy from  
8 the University of Chicago, which he'll be  
9 graduating in June.

10 Welcome, Jordan. There is no  
11 shortage of work and we are very glad to have your  
12 help to help tackle the ICC's most complex issues.

13 I have no other announcements and  
14 hearing no objection, the meeting stands adjourned.  
15 Thank you.

16 (WHEREUPON, the above-entitled  
17 matter was adjourned.)  
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19  
20  
21  
22