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**CONTACT:** Tori Leonard  
410-767-8054  
[tori.leonard@maryland.gov](mailto:tori.leonard@maryland.gov)

## **Maryland PSC Seeks Comments on Request to Halt Summer Utility Shut-Offs**

*PSC also reminds utilities of rules on disconnections during extreme weather*

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**Media Contact:** Tori Leonard | [tori.leonard@maryland.gov](mailto:tori.leonard@maryland.gov) | (410) 767-8054

(BALTIMORE, MD) - The Maryland Public Service Commission seeks comments by **June 28, 2024** from utilities and interested stakeholders to a petition filed on June 18 by the Maryland Office of People's Counsel (OPC). OPC's petition noted that weather forecasts call for record-breaking heat this summer, and requested an emergency order prohibiting utility companies from shutting off service until September 15, 2024 (or in the alternative, requiring shutoffs be accompanied by an affidavit affirming that the shutoff does not pose a threat to health or safety).

The Commission's regulations governing service disconnections during periods of extreme heat provide the following protections:

*A utility may not terminate, either gas service that is used for cooling if the customer has notified the gas utility of that usage, or electric service, because of nonpayment, for any customer occupying a residential building, for which the temperature forecast made for the utility's weather station area for that customer at 6 a.m. is 95 degrees Fahrenheit or above in that weather station area during an extreme weather period\*.*

Electric utilities must comply with these regulations during any extreme weather period that may occur this summer. In addition, the Commission expects utilities to exercise sound judgment before terminating any customer's service, even if the temperature on the day of termination does not reach the temperature for an extreme weather period.

In its petition, OPC argued that existing protections against high heat are insufficient to protect Maryland residents, requested that the heat index - in addition to temperature - be incorporated into restrictions on terminations, and requested that the Commission require utilities to temporarily waive fees and

deposits for customers wishing to reconnect disconnected service between now and September 15, 2024.

Any party wishing to submit comments in response to OPC's petition and the Commission's notice may use the Commission's e-File system on its website, [www.psc.state.md.us](http://www.psc.state.md.us), in the docket for Case No. 9745. Comments should be addressed to Andrew S. Johnston, Executive Secretary, Maryland Public Service Commission, William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 St. Paul Street, 16th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202.

*\*"Extreme weather period" means a period of 72 hours beginning at 6 a.m. on any given day comprised of three consecutive 24-hour segments during any one of which the temperature, as forecast, is not expected to exceed 32 degrees Fahrenheit or is expected to be 95 degrees Fahrenheit or above during the segments. Determination of the possible existence of an extreme weather period must be repeated every 24 hours at 6 a.m.  
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**About the Public Service Commission:**

*The Maryland Public Service Commission regulates electric and gas utilities and suppliers, telephone companies (land lines), certain water and sewer companies, passenger motor vehicle carriers for hire (sedans, limousines, buses, Uber, Lyft), taxicab companies (in Baltimore City and County, Charles County, Cumberland and Hagerstown) and bay pilot rates.*

WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER TOWER · 6 ST. PAUL STREET · BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202-6806

410-767-8000

Toll Free: 1-800-492-0474

FAX: 410-333-6495

MDRS: 1-800-735-2258 (TTY/Voice)

Website: [www.psc.state.md.us](http://www.psc.state.md.us)