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Baker-Polito Administration Temporarily Prohibits Utility Shutoffs to Protect Massachusetts Ratepayers

The Baker-Polito Administration today announced further action to support ratepayers during the COVID-19 outbreak

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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The Baker-Polito Administration today announced further action to support ratepayers during the COVID-19 outbreak, directing the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to issue an [Order](/doc/chairs-1st-set-of-orders-under-c-25-s-4b-re-covid-19/download) prohibiting investor-owned utility companies from shutting off gas, electric, and water utility service to any customers for failure to pay a bill or a portion of a bill until the State of Emergency is lifted or the DPU determines otherwise.

The announcement builds upon the DPU's March 13 [moratorium](/doc/covid-19-shutoff-moratorium-eversource-and-national-grid/download) requesting utility companies refrain from shutting off gas and electric service to residents across the Commonwealth. The new order will expand the moratorium to include any investor-owned utility customers, including industrial, commercial, and small business customers, during the State of Emergency.

“Protecting the health and safety of Massachusetts residents remains the Baker-Polito Administration’s highest priority, and this order will ensure the continued availability of gas, electric, and water service to all ratepayers during the state of emergency,” **said DPU Chairman Matthew Nelson**. “Today’s action will also protect residents and businesses from added economic pressure during these difficult and uncertain times.”

The Order also prohibits investor-owned utility companies from sending communications that threaten to shut off gas, electric, or water service to any of their customers for failure to pay a bill or any portion of a bill the Companies issued to a customer. Any company that fails to comply with these orders may be assessed penalties of up to \$1 million per violation.

Additionally, on March 13, the DPU [formally requested](/doc/covid-19-letter-to-comp-suppliers/download) that that residential competitive electricity suppliers and licensed electricity brokers cease door-to-door marketing activities to ensure that proper risk management protocols have been taken to prevent the spread of COVID-

19, prioritizing the health and safety of both consumers and any agents conducting marketing efforts.

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[Department of Public Utilities](/orgs/department-of-public-utilities)

The DPU oversees investor-owned electric power, natural gas, and water companies in Massachusetts. In addition, the DPU regulates the safety of bus companies, moving companies, and transportation network companies. We also oversee the safety of natural gas pipelines.

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