

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

Submitted via e-mail

Alabama Public Service Commission
Commission President Twinkle Andress Cavanaugh
Commissioner Jeremy H. Oden, Place 1
Commissioner Chris "Chip" Beeker, Place 2
100 North Union Street
P.O. Box 304260
Montgomery, AL 36130

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the members of the undersigned organizations, we urge you to take immediate action to refund customers for the amount they have overpaid Alabama Power for fuel, according to information filed in Docket 18148. As of May 2020, customers have overpaid Alabama Power for fuel by \$112 million.¹

Considering the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), customers need relief now more than ever. The Alabama Public Service Commission (PSC) has a duty to all Alabamians to act immediately.

The PSC did not take official action to cease disconnections and late fees, despite requests from community organizations throughout the state. Georgia Power, the sister company of Alabama Power, is set to begin disconnections today, July 15 however, neither the Alabama PSC nor Alabama Power have communicated its plans to the public.

Thousands of Alabamians are at risk of disconnection and many are likely months behind on their utility bill payments. Data from North Carolina shows just under 800,000 residential customers and 60,000 non-residential customers eligible for disconnection and owing \$253 million in payments.²

The PSC is able to provide some financial relief and Alabamians deserve decisive action from its elected leaders.

In Florida, the Public Service Commission ordered the state's regulated utilities to refund fuel savings back to customers. Tampa Electric refunded customers \$130 million³, Florida Power &

¹ See:

<https://www.pscpublicaccess.alabama.gov/pscpublicaccess/PSC/PSCDocumentDetailsPage.aspx?DocumentId=0a56a562-f1e0-4303-b5b1-7f42e398e9db&Class=Filing>

² See: <https://starw1.ncuc.net/NCUC/ViewFile.aspx?Id=24043568-beb8-47e7-bf32-723aed9ca95f>

³ See: <https://floridapolitics.com/archives/325342-teco-plans-to-pass-130m-in-fuel-savings-to-customers-to-help-offset-coronavirus-losses>

Light issued customers a one-time bill credit of just over \$20⁴, and Duke Energy provided customers a one-time ~20% reduction in their monthly bill⁵.

We urge the Alabama Public Service Commission to issue an order to refund customers the \$112 million in excess fuel costs they have paid Alabama Power. We further ask for an update from the Commission on its plans for utility disconnection and late fee policies through the end of the year.

As we stated in March of this year, the Alabama Public Service Commission has an opportunity to provide that reliability and stability to the people of Alabama during the one of the greatest public health and economic crises of our lifetime.

We still remain hopeful that you will yet rise to the challenge.

Regards,

Rev. Dr. David Barnhart, Pastor, Saint Junia United Methodist Church

Carla Crowder, Executive Director, Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

Shay Farley, Interim Deputy Policy Officer for the Southeast, Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund

Rev. Carolyn Foster, Tri-Chair, Alabama Poor People's Campaign

Michael Hansen, Executive Director, Gasp

Robyn Hyden, Executive Director, Alabama Arise

Cindy Lowry, Executive Director, Alabama Rivers Alliance

Rev. Michael Malcom, Executive Director, Alabama Interfaith Power and Light

Cara McClure and Eric Hall, Co-Founders, Black Lives Matter Birmingham

Charles Scribner, Executive Director, Black Warrior Riverkeeper

Stephen Stetson, Senior Campaign Representative, Sierra Club

Daniel Tait, Chief Operating Officer, Energy Alabama

Jessica Vosburgh, Executive & Legal Director, Adelante Alabama Worker Center

⁴ See: <https://www.floridatoday.com/story/news/local/2020/03/30/fpl-bills-may-cut-may-doe-coronavirus-economics/5086973002/>

⁵ <https://www.wtsp.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/duke-energy-florida-lowering-may-bill-21-percent/67-f6658a1e-5a91-4a97-b654-f47363ca3147>