



# Department of Public Service

## Public Service Commission

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September 23, 2020

**To:** Municipal water providers  
Water works corporations

**Re:** Protecting Residential Water Customers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

As you may know, a recent amendment to the Public Service Law enacts a moratorium on disconnecting residential electricity, gas, steam, telephone, and water customers during the COVID-19 state of emergency. In cooperation with the Department of Health, Division of Environmental Health Protection, I am reaching out to public water systems administrators and operators to offer technical guidance and answer questions you may have.

The new law, which amends Public Service Law [§89-b](#) and [§89-l](#), prohibits water works corporations and municipalities from disconnecting residential customers for nonpayment during the COVID-19 state of emergency. The law further prohibits disconnections for nonpayment for 180 days after the state of emergency is lifted or expired (which is currently set for October 4, 2020) if the customer has experienced a change in financial circumstances during the state of emergency. The law does not eliminate a customer's obligation to pay for service and instead requires water systems to offer deferred payment agreements with no money down, late fees, or penalties to customers who would otherwise be subject to be disconnection for nonpayment. Water systems must notify their residential customers of these protections. The Department of Public Service recently published the enclosed guidance in [Matter 20-01676](#) to help utility providers interpret and implement the law.

If you have any questions about these customer protections, please contact us at [utility.moratorium@dps.ny.gov](mailto:utility.moratorium@dps.ny.gov).

Sincerely,

Alicia Sullivan  
Deputy Counsel

cc: Roger Sokol, NYS Department of Health

Enclosures