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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

**GOVERNOR CUOMO SIGNS LEGISLATION EXTENDING MORATORIUM THAT PREVENTS UTILITY COMPANIES FROM DISCONNECTING UTILITIES**

***Moratorium Extended for Period of 180 Days After Either the COVID-19 State of Emergency is Lifted or December 31, 2021***

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed legislation (S.1453-B/A.6225-A) extending a moratorium that prevents utility companies from disconnecting utilities to residential households and small businesses that are struggling with their bills due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The moratorium is extended for a period of 180 days after the COVID-19 state of emergency is lifted or 180 days after December 31, 2021, whichever is earlier. Utility companies must instead offer these customers a deferred payment agreement without fees or penalties on any past-due balance. This legislation will expand to cable and broadband internet service providers and additionally make the moratorium protections available to small businesses, in keeping with priorities laid out by the Governor in his 2021 State of the State address.

"The COVID pandemic has taken a tremendous toll on all New Yorkers, and as we get closer to the light at the end of the tunnel we must provide residents with the support they need to recover and rebuild," **Governor Cuomo said.** "Utility companies provide essential services, and we need to make sure they continue to provide them in every situation - especially to those individuals who have suffered the most from COVID and are struggling to make ends meet. That's why New York was the first state in the nation to establish a statewide moratorium on all utility shutoffs during the COVID crisis and why we're extending that moratorium to make sure every single New Yorker can continue to provide for themselves and their families."

**Senator Kevin Parker said,** "The COVID-19 Pandemic has threatened New Yorkers lives and livelihoods. Many have lost their jobs due to no fault of their own and consequently cannot pay their utility bills. This Utility Moratorium protects them as we rebuild the economy and put people back to work. Thank you Governor Cuomo for signing this important legislation into law."

**Assemblymember Diana Richardson said,** "More than a year into this pandemic, many New Yorkers are still struggling to make ends meet. At a time when people are focused on health and safety, maintaining and expanding the existing utility-shut off

moratorium is essential to helping New Yorkers avoid increased hardship and ensuring they are able to maintain their quality of life."

The Governor has previously enacted some of the strongest and most progressive consumer protection and assistance programs in the country. Governor Cuomo established New York's energy affordability policy in 2016. The policy extended energy bill support to more than 152,000 additional New York families, ensuring that more than 920,000 New York families spend no more than 6 percent of their income on energy bills. Through this program, New York commits more than \$238 million annually helping to keep the lights and heat on for our most vulnerable New Yorkers, while actively striving to expand coverage to additional families. In addition, to encourage gas and electric utilities to forgo arrears collection from eligible low-income residential customers who rent, the enacted budget provides a dollar-for-dollar income tax credit on up to 12 months of arrears owed to the utility by those eligible customers.

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