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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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July 17, 2020

Ald. Khalif J. Rainey  
(414) 286-2863

## **MEDIA ALERT**

### **Council members seek reversal of utility power shut-off decision**

Fourteen members of the Common Council Thursday (see **attached letter**) requested the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to reverse its June decision to allow Wisconsin utilities to begin disconnecting power to customers who have fallen behind on payments.

The letter – dated July 16 and spearheaded by **Alderman Khalif J. Rainey** – cites the PSC’s move to void the move by Governor Evers to suspend power disconnections until later this month, as well as the dire economic situation many are facing because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The letter states, in part: “We write to ask you in the strongest possible terms to re-think your June 11 decision permitting Wisconsin utilities to begin disconnecting power to those who have fallen behind in their payments.

Governor Evers' earlier decision to suspend disconnections through July 25 was made in the good-faith belief that by the end of this month some end to the economic devastation that has been brought to this State by the COVID-19 pandemic would be in sight. No serious person believes this relief has come or will come any time soon. Whether through the imprudent decision to precipitously open our State or the natural path of this virus, businesses remain closed, schools are struggling to open, and far too many remain unemployed.”

In part, the letter continues: “To add to this burden by threatening to disconnect them from even cooling, heat, and light is an unconscionable breach of basic decency.

Your charge is to ensure that these regulated monopolies conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the public interest. Only a significant extension of the moratorium on disconnections would fulfill this charge.”

In addition to Alderman Rainey, the letter is signed by Alderman Ashanti Hamilton, Alderman Cavalier Johnson, Alderman Nik Kovac, Alderman Robert J. Bauman, Alderwoman Nikiya Dodd, Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Alderwoman JoCasta Zamarripa, Alderwoman Chantia Lewis, Alderman Michael J. Murphy, Alderman Mark A. Borkowski, Alderman José G. Pérez, Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic, Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II, and

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CITY OF MILWAUKEE

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City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202 • [www.city.milwaukee.gov](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov)

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July 16, 2020

The Honorable,  
Members of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin  
P.O. Box 7854  
Madison, WI 53707-7854

Honorable Members,

We write to ask you in the strongest possible terms to re-think your June 11 decision permitting Wisconsin utilities to begin disconnecting power to those who have fallen behind in their payments.

Governor Evers' earlier decision to suspend disconnections through July 25 was made in the good-faith belief that by the end of this month some end to the economic devastation that has been brought to this State by the COVID-19 pandemic would be in sight. No serious person believes this relief has come or will come any time soon. Whether through the imprudent decision to precipitously open our State or the natural path of this virus, businesses remain closed, schools are struggling to open, and far too many remain unemployed.

Making matters worse, the federal Paycheck Protection Program that persuaded many businesses to retain their employees in the hope that matters would improve will shortly end and the consequences are already being felt as companies of all types are announcing layoffs on a painfully regular basis.

And, as is too frequently the case, the effects are being felt most acutely by the most vulnerable. Front-line restaurant and bar workers, hotel staffs, those serving sports and entertainment venues, etc., have been willing to risk so much just to provide for themselves and their families only to be turned out as our economy remains closed. To add to this burden by threatening to disconnect them from even cooling, heat, and light is an unconscionable breach of basic decency.

Your charge is to ensure that these regulated monopolies conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the public interest. Only a significant extension of the moratorium on disconnections would fulfill this charge.

We ask that you act decisively and soon.

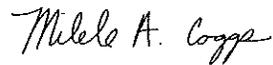
Respectfully,



Khalif J. Rainey  
Alderman, 7<sup>th</sup> District



Nik Kovac  
Alderman, 3<sup>rd</sup> District



Milele A. Coggs  
Alderwoman, 6<sup>th</sup> District



Michael J. Murphy  
Alderman, 10<sup>th</sup> District



Marina Dimitrijevic  
Alderwoman, 14<sup>th</sup> District



Ashanti Hamilton  
Alderman, 1<sup>st</sup> District



Robert J. Bauman  
Alderman, 4<sup>th</sup> District



JoCasta Zamarripa  
Alderwoman, 8<sup>th</sup> District



Mark A. Borkowski  
Alderman, 11<sup>th</sup> District



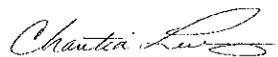
Russell W. Stamper, II  
Alderman, 15<sup>th</sup> District



Cavalier Johnson  
Alderman, 2<sup>nd</sup> District



Nikiya Dodd  
Alderwoman, 5<sup>th</sup> District



Chantia Lewis  
Alderwoman, 9<sup>th</sup> District



José G. Pérez  
Alderman, 12<sup>th</sup> District