



Native American Youth and Family Center

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February 23, 2020

To: Oregon Public Utility Commission

RE: Investigation into the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Utility Customers
Docket No. UM 2114

For the record, my name is William Miller (Blackfeet/Cherokee) and I have the honor of serving as the Community Advocacy Manager with the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA). NAYA's wraparound programs directly serve over 2,000 individual Native American youth, adults, and Elders every year and positively impacts more than 10,000 lives throughout Portland's growing urban Native community. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our organization has continued to provide direct social services for communities in need.

One of these critical services is utility assistance for individuals and families struggling to get by. After speaking with NAYA's Lead Energy Assistance Specialist, Mandi Smith, Mandi stated, "The pandemic is not over, many folks in our community are unable to work resulting from job loss or have contracted the virus themselves. For our clients to worry about being without power would cause widespread panic for Multnomah County residents. This would result in increased social determinants of health and a cascade impact of other events. Given our global pandemic, local non-profit organizations have been working at capacity for over a year trying to prevent potentially catastrophic impacts to our families. It would widely benefit the communities we live and serve if you extend the disconnections moratorium through April 1, 2022. This would give our community the time needed to flourish financially despite their current hardships.

On behalf of the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) we urge you to strongly consider extending the disconnections moratorium through April 1, 2022.

Thank you,

William Miller
Advocacy Manager
Native American Youth and Family Center