STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE: SUSPENSION OF SERVICE TERMINATIONS :
AND CERTAIN COLLECTIONS ACTIVITIES : **DOCKET NO. 5022**
DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY :

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION'S FOURTH SET OF DATA REQUESTS
DIRECTED TO ALL REGULATED UTILITIES
WAIVED FEES – AUGUST 2021 UPDATE
(Please identify the utility in the response)
(Issued August 12, 2021)

BLOCK ISLAND UTILITY DISTRICT

1. Does Block Island Utility District believe that the inability to charge late/interest fees is a hinderance to collections of outstanding balances. Please explain in detail.

    A. Yes. Although our collections are now mostly on par with a normal pre-COVID year, we do however support charging a late fee in fairness to those utility district members who pay their bills on time.

2. If the prohibition on charging late/interest fees is lifted, what measures and means of communications would Block Island Utility District utilize to inform customers that they will again be subject to these fees on overdue balances? What does Block Island Utility District believe is a reasonable notice period prior to the lifting of the prohibition to properly educate customers?

    A. We would do a bill insert and a notice in the BI Times. We feel that a 60-day notice period would be appropriate.

3. Has Block Island Utility District determined if the waiver of credit card/debit card/online check fees has resulted in better collections activities from any class of customers? If so, please explain/provide data. If not, please explain. If the utility already absorbs these fees, please advise.

    A. We have never charged a fee for credit card/debit card/online check payments. It is our believe that not charging a fee encourages electronic payments which ultimately saves processing expenses and improves cash flow.

4. If the Commission were to lift the prohibition on assessing credit card fees, what is [Name of Utility's] intent on whether to reinstitute the fee? If the utility already absorbs the fees, this can be N/A.

    A. N/A