

## Massaro, Luly (PUC)

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**From:** Michael McElroy <Michael@mcelroylawoffice.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 23, 2020 11:44 AM  
**To:** Massaro, Luly (PUC); WilsonFrias, Cynthia (PUC)  
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**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] : Re: Docket No. 5022 - COVID-19 Emergency Order

Luly:

As you know, this office represents Providence Water. Please accept this email as Providence Water's answers to the Commission's most recent Order #23826 in Docket 5022. I apologize for the 1-day delay.

**Comm. 1-1: Have collections dropped off over the past eight weeks vs. last year?**

Response: Yes.

**Comm. 1-2: If collections have dropped off, please quantify the reduction.**

Response: During that time frame, our collection activity has dropped off by 13.50%.

**Comm. 1-3: What effect has any such reduction had on the utility's cash flow?**

Response: Providence Water has not been able to fully fund our restricted accounts. However, we have been able to meet all our other financial obligations.

**Comm. 1-4: Has the utility been unable to meet any financial obligations or does it expect to be unable to meet any financial obligations over the next two weeks if it cannot commence termination of service as a collections option?**

Response: Providence Water has not been able to fully fund our restricted accounts. However, we have been able to meet all our other financial obligations.

**Comm. 1-5: Please provide any information on your plans for termination of service through April 30, 2020 absent an order by the PUC.**

Response: Providence Water previously provided to the Commission our collection activities plan absent an order from the PUC. Below is an **UPDATE** to that plan.

Once the Commission lifts the termination moratorium in Docket 5022, Providence Water will slowly ease back into our collection practices. We will start with customer outreach that will include but will not be limited to, a dedicated staff calling residential and commercial customers with outstanding balances over 90 days or greater.

If the call results find that our customers are still out of work or under doctor's care due to the COVID-19 virus, or if businesses remain closed, then we will add the account to a COVID Call Back tracking spreadsheet and reach out to the account on a monthly basis for updates.

**UPDATE:** Providence Water will be reopening our Customer Service Center on a limited basis beginning Tuesday, May 26, 2020. We will be open to customers on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. We will remain open until all customers waiting each day have been serviced. Customers will be able to make payments, set up payment arrangements, make meter appointments, get real estate closing information, and complete general customer service matters. Reopening days and hours will be reassessed periodically, with a goal of gradually returning to normal Customer Service Center hours, consistent with City and State guidance. Our Customer Service Center and staff have been set up to follow all State guidelines regarding social distancing and sanitation.

We will provide "customer comfortable" payment plans that can meet customer needs while not affecting our day to day responsibilities and obligations. Providence Water will also offer our *residential and commercial* customers an interest-free 3-month payment agreement on their outstanding balance if requested. If special conditions apply or longer plans are requested they will require supervisory approval and will be re-evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Under extreme circumstances, Providence Water, with supervisor approval, could offer up to a 1-year payment plan at 1% monthly interest if the customer has a proven satisfactory past payment history.

Providence Water recognizes that the termination of water service to a residential account could lead to serious health concerns because the residents would not have the ability to wash their hands or practice good hygiene. This pandemic has caused a financial strain on the community so we expect to see a continued drop off on our collection activity. However, it has not yet caused serious concerns for our cash flow.

If a drop off in collection activity leads to a serious cash flow issue, we plan to petition the PUC and seek approval to tap into our restricted accounts.

Providence Water will adhere to all future orders filed by the PUC and the Division.

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On Fri, May 8, 2020 at 5:56 PM Massaro, Luly (PUC) <[Luly.Massaro@puc.ri.gov](mailto:Luly.Massaro@puc.ri.gov)> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Attached is PUC Order No. 23826 extending previously issued Orders on March 16, 2020, March 30, 2020 and April 13, 2020 in connection with the above docket. PUC Order No. 23826 continues the mandate that regulated utilities suspend service terminations and collection activities during the COVID-19 Emergency, for temporary duration, through May 31, 2020.

Stay safe and well,

Luly

Luly Massaro

Commission Clerk

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