

Milwaukee Common Council: Members seek reversal of utility power shut-off decision

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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