



NARUC
National Association of Regulatory
Utility Commissioners

For Immediate Release

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NARUC Statement on COVID19

WASHINGTON (March 18, 2020) – In response to the coronavirus disease 2019, known as COVID19, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners President Brandon Presley of Mississippi has issued the following statement:

“As every American knows, we are in the grips of a serious pandemic that has upended many of our day-to-day lives. This is a challenging time for all of us: layoffs have occurred, schools in many districts have closed, local and national economies are suffering, stores are trying to manage their inventories—and individuals have been infected by the virus.

“In the midst of these challenges, worrying about continued access to utility service should not be among anyone’s concerns. Many people are just beginning to fully realize how closely utility service – and its effective regulation — is tied to public health and the overall public welfare. On behalf of NARUC, I want to thank our commissioners for their attention to the many issues associated with COVID19.

“The regulators’ mission to serve the public interest by assuring the delivery of safe, reliable service at reasonable rates is critically apparent now. Members of the electricity, gas and water industries have briefed state regulators with their plans to adhere to established health protocols to ensure the safety of both the public and utility personnel. We are pleased to see that many states have placed a moratorium on service disconnections during the pandemic.

“This pandemic has also heightened attention to the digital divide that exists in many communities. To help minimize the disruption caused by limited access to the Internet or the need to access services via mobile rather than fixed broadband, I have asked the Federal Communications Commission to require wireless carriers to lift data caps and drop data overage charges on wireless plans. I urge telecommunications companies to work proactively with communities to ensure that students left out of school are not left behind academically.

"As for our Association, we are taking the pandemic seriously and have cancelled or postponed events scheduled through May. We are firmly committed to ensuring the safety of our members, staff, attendees and all personnel associated with our meetings.

“We do not know how long the state of emergency will last. However, by working together with state and local officials and industry, heeding the advice of medical professionals and only sharing professional resources, we can ensure the safety of our communities.”

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About NARUC

NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of state public utility commissions before the three branches of the federal government.