

From: [Kelly Grams](#)
To: [TPUC DocketRoom](#)
Subject: FW: Stop the Shut Off Tweets
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 4:42:24 PM

Please file in Docket No. 20-00047.

From: Greg Mitchell <greg.mitchell@tn.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 5, 2021 4:33 PM
To: Tim Schwarz <Tim.Schwarz@tn.gov>
Cc: Kelly Grams <Kelly.Grams@tn.gov>
Subject: Stop the Shut Off Tweets

From #stoptheshutoff group - sent Sunday evening via Twitter by @biblioghoul (her Twitter name) from Illinois.

Greg

*** This is an EXTERNAL email. Please exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email - STS-Security. ***



TN Public Utilities Commission: The People of TN Demand You Stop the Shutoffs!

TO:


Commissioner Robin L. Morrison
Commissioner David F. Jones
Vice Chair Herbert H. Hilliard
Chair Kenneth C. Hill
Commissioner John A. Hie
Executive Director Earl Taylor

FROM:

The People of Tennessee
Stop the Shutoffs Committee, TN

In the midst of a global pandemic and economic recession, utilities shutoffs have resumed for most Tennessee residents. The Tennessee Public Utilities Commission has the power to stop the shutoffs and to prevent poor and working-class families in Nashville from going without heat or electric access this winter. They halted utilities shutoffs earlier this summer, and we demand that they use this power to halt them again now!

In September, the ban on electric shutoffs was lifted by Nashville Electric Services (NES) and many other electric and utility providers. But the pandemic and recession have not gone anywhere. With this third wave of the COVID-19 virus, working families have been hit hard. Those in the service industry--one of Tennessee's largest economic sectors--have already had their working hours reduced or eliminated altogether because of the pandemic. For those still on payrolls, they are more often put into contact with the public than are those in other jobs, increasing their risks of catching the virus. Apart from endangering their lives, the quarantine and isolation periods required to stymie the infection rates make those who catch it unable to work for at least two weeks. This, plus the associated medical bills, stretches incomes to the breaking point.



In addition to those in the hard-hit service sector, hundreds of thousands have found themselves laid off or otherwise taken hits to their sources of income because of the pandemic, with many workplaces shuttering their doors and closing permanently. Unemployment stood at 14.7% in April of this year (<https://www.sycamoreinstitute.tn.org/coronavirus-recession-people-places-employers/>), and though it has since steadily declined, the type of gig-economy jobs many have resorted to to be considered “employed” again do not provide enough pay and benefits to maintain decent living standards. And with this latest spike in cases and the subsequent increases in lockdown measures, unemployment is again on the rise (<https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.tn.htm>). The unemployment benefits office continues to be swamped with claims, the number of which remains at an all time high.

While some utility providers have small amounts of grant money that can be applied for to get financial aid, this is not enough. In addition to shutoffs, late fees are back again at many providers, which disproportionately impact those with lower incomes.

It is not the fault of these workers that they are unable to pay their bills--it's the fault of an economic system that tosses them into the streets at the first signs of distress in order to salvage whatever profits it can for the 1%. It's the fault of a system that risks the lives and well-beings of workers in a global pandemic so that a few extra dollars can be made for the bosses. It's the fault of capitalism and its systematic exploitation of the working-class. The billionaires have made billions during the pandemic while the rest of us have suffered. (<https://www.liberationnews.org/amazon-workers-unite-and-fight-bezos-obscene-fortune-only-possible-because-of-the-work-we-do/>)

We demand that the Tennessee Public Utilities Commission show the same respect for Tennessee's working-class that our leaders have shown for its 1%. We call on its leaders to again halt all utilities shutoffs and late fees until such a time that an economic and community-health recovery from the pandemic is possible. We call on them to also halt all debt accumulations for those who are unable to pay due to the crisis--waive the fees and the payments so that the people can survive and live decent lives!

>
> Greg
>

