

July 20, 2020

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Support for a Nationwide Moratorium on Water Shut-Offs in the Next Stimulus**

Dear Minority Leader Schumer and Senator Gillibrand:

We, the undersigned 29 organizations representing thousands of New York residents, strongly support a national water shut-off moratorium, with service restoration for all homes previously disconnected for nonpayment, in the next stimulus bill.

Thank you for your leadership in passing bipartisan legislation to address the urgent needs of the American people as we confront the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic devastation, but our communities need more help. The House passed a nationwide water shut-off moratorium in the HEROES Act (HR 6800), and as the Senate prepares to take up the next stimulus, we ask that you ensure the passage of a nationwide shut-off moratorium.

Specifically, we ask for a strong national moratorium on service disconnections for nonpayment that:

- 1) Applies to all utilities, regardless of private or public ownership;
- 2) Lasts for the duration of the national emergency and a sufficient grace period of at least an additional 180 days beyond the emergency's end to allow families to recover from unemployment and other coronavirus-related impacts;
- 3) Reinstates utility services for all households whose services have previously been cut off for nonpayment;
- 4) Waives all late payment fees, penalties and service restoration fees through the end of the grace period; and
- 5) Contains no weakening clauses or loopholes (such as "to the maximum extent practicable" or "nothing in this section shall be construed to...preempt any State or local law or regulation").

We further ask that you prioritize dedicated funding for low-income household water bills and publicly owned water providers. A comprehensive water infrastructure funding program, such as in the Water Affordability, Transparency, Equity, and Reliability Act (HR 1417, S 611) will not

only help protect human health and public health, but it will also provide long-term economic stimulus to our state and create up to one million jobs across the country. According to the Clean Water Council, every \$1 billion in water infrastructure investment creates an estimated 20,003 to 26,669 jobs and can have far-reaching economic benefits, tripling in size with total demand for goods and services reaching an estimated \$2.87 to \$3.46 billion.

We urge you to champion universal access to clean water in the next stimulus package by passing a nationwide shut-off moratorium and funding safe water for all.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,

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**Food & Water Action**

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