

The Honorable Bill Lee, Governor
Tennessee State Capitol
1st Floor
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Lee,

The undersigned organizations, on behalf of our thousands of members and supporters across the state are asking that you put the full weight of your administration behind protecting the public's health and safety during this time of crisis.

We want to share with you our very real concerns about the ability of all Tennesseans to make ends meet as businesses close or lay off workers and people go without paychecks for an extended period of time. We encourage you to take immediate actions to assist families struggling to keep on vital services in their homes. These actions should include a state-wide moratorium on electric, gas, water and telecommunications disconnections, as well as a prohibition on utilities from issuing late or reconnection fees, or approving rate increases on consumers, as a result of the national emergency caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

As you know, the Tennessee Valley Authority ("TVA") issued additional funds last month to allow local power companies ("LPCs") to delay wholesale power payments. This was a positive step by TVA and it reinforced earlier decisions by several LPCs in Tennessee to protect electric customers from service shut offs. Unfortunately, many LPCs in Tennessee have either failed to act on this guidance or are still charging customers late fees. Some LPCs have even cut off electric services for non-payments. These actions are unacceptable during a national emergency.

Therefore, we ask that you use your authority under Tennessee law to order our state's electric, gas, water and telecommunications utilities to keep people healthy and safe at home by maintaining these vital services. We also ask that you order these utilities to immediately re-establish services to anyone that previously lost them. Similar requests have recently been made by Stand Up Nashville and other faith, labor and community organizations in a letter that was sent to your office, providing further impetus for implementing these critical measures.

We are also aware that you are considering using hundreds of millions of dollars from the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families ("TANF") program to help low-income families struggling from the effects of the outbreak. We support this effort to allocate over \$700 million of unobligated federal funds to ensure that hundreds of thousands of Tennesseans are not left vulnerable during the health and economic crisis now upon us, especially as utility bills come due, unemployment rates go up and businesses shutter across the state.

In addition to utilizing existing TANF funds, we encourage you to streamline the use of funds recently approved by Congress for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program ("LIHEAP"). Getting these dollars into the hands of the people that need them as quickly as possible will not only alleviate financial pressure from home energy bills, but will also create jobs through weatherization and energy-related minor home repairs.

By taking the measures above to halt utility service shut offs and fees, you can address some of the burdens that are affecting the lives of everyday Tennesseans the most. Now more than ever, residents and businesses across the state need to know they will get the immediate assistance they require.

Thank you for considering these requests.

Sincerely,

Bill Moll, Conservation Chair, The Tennessee Chapter of Sierra Club
Brianna Knisley, Tennessee Campaign Coordinator, Appalachian Voices
Erica M. Davis, President, Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM)
Stanley Johnson, Executive Director, SEEED Inc
Maggie Shober, Director of Utility Reform, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
Shiva Patel, Energy Justice Campaigner, Center for Biological Diversity
Rev. Jim Sessions, Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee
Jimmie M Garland, Vice President, Tennessee NAACP State Conference
Johnnie William Skinner, Sr., Knoxville Branch NAACP
Kathy Hawes, Executive Director, Tennessee Clean Water Network
Brady Watson, Co-Chair, Nashville and Middle Tennessee Indivisible
Kari Keeling, Kim Spoon, and Nathan Higdon, co-chairs, Indivisible East TN
Sepia Coleman, CNA and community leader, Fight for \$15
Marie Webster, Director, Clearfork Community Institute
LaTricea Adams, CEO & President, Black Millennials 4 Flint-Memphis Chapter
Tonia Brookman, Director, Woodland Community Land Trust and Woodland Community Development Corp
Joe Payne, Powell Valley Electric Cooperative Member Voices
Joshua Perkins, President, Memphis Urban League Young Professionals
Ben Allen, Organizer, Science for the People - East Tennessee
Marquita Bradshaw, Environmental Justice Chair, Chickasaw Group of Sierra Club
Rick Held, Director, Community Voices Coalition (Knoxville)
April Jarocki, Coordinator, Southern Connected Communities Project
Deborah Bahr, Director, Clean Water Expected in East Tennessee
Betsy Garber, President, Tennessee Interfaith Power & Light
Brady Watson, Co-Chair, Nashville and Middle TN Indivisible
Duffy-Marie Arnoult and Vance LaVelle, Co-Chairs, The Climate Reality Project: Memphis and Mid-South Regional Chapter
Michael Walton, Executive Director, green|spaces Chattanooga
Rev. Ann Cover, Chairperson, Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church Creation Care Ministries
Darrell Coker, Tennessee Appalachia Community Economics (TNACE)
Isabella Killius, Community Youth Organizer, Sunrise Movement Knoxville
Pastor Christopher Battle, The Underground Collective
Tanya T. Coats, President, Knox County Education Association
Eli Stanfield, Co-Chair, Jobs with Justice of East Tennessee
Constance M Every, Chairman, Sleeves4Needs & Black Coffee

