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## **NEW JERSEY BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES PRESS RELEASE**

### **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 2, 2020

### **Contact:**

Peter Peretzman  
(609) 900-5626

## **NJBPU Adopts New Rules to Protect Residents Who Depend on Life-Saving Medical Equipment at Home**

*Rule Amendments Will Prevent Service Shutoffs, Protect Health and Safety*

**Trenton, N.J.**—The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) today gave final approval to new rules that increase protections for residents who rely on life-sustaining medical equipment in their homes.

The rules prevent electric and gas service shutoffs for occupants of any residence who have provided their utility with proper verification that someone in that home is using life-sustaining medical equipment. The rules provide additional safeguards to those already required by Linda’s Law, which was signed by Governor Murphy on July 5, 2019, in response to the death of Newark resident Linda Daniels following a utility service shutoff.

Due to the statewide response to the coronavirus pandemic, all New Jersey gas, electric, internet, phone, and water utilities have currently suspended service shutoffs, until further notice.

“Linda Daniels’s death exposed flaws in the system that were addressed by Linda’s Law and the new rules the Board approved today,” said NJBPU President Joseph L. Fiordaliso. “These rules will further protect the health and safety of New Jersey residents who depend on the continued operation of life-sustaining medical equipment.”

The amendments the Board approved today will:

- Increase the period of time before electric and gas utility service can be discontinued for nonpayment, from 60 days to 90 days;

- Require utilities to determine at least quarterly whether life-sustaining equipment is present at the customer's residence;
- Expand the list of qualified medical professionals who may provide a statement verifying that the loss of electricity would aggravate the customer's condition;
- Broaden the requirements for restoring service when an unknown account or master metered account is disconnected; and,
- Require utilities to develop outreach plans and distribute them to customers quarterly, in order to educate the public and customers regarding the procedures and guidelines to qualify and apply for medical certification status.

The rule amendments will be published in the New Jersey Register on August 17, 2020, and will become effective on that date.

*About the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU)*

*NJBPU is a state agency and regulatory authority mandated to ensure safe, adequate and proper utility services at reasonable rates for New Jersey customers. Critical services regulated by NJBPU include natural gas, electricity, water, wastewater, telecommunications and cable television. The Board has general oversight and responsibility for monitoring utility service, responding to consumer complaints, and investigating utility accidents. To find out more about NJBPU, visit our web site at [www.nj.gov/bpu](http://www.nj.gov/bpu).*

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