



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
Board of Public Utilities
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www.nj.gov/bpu/

CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

IN THE MATTER OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES' SUMMER TERMINATION PROGRAM) ORDER
)
) DOCKET NO. AX26040108

Parties of Record:

- Brian O. Lipman, Esq., Director**, New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel
- Clark Stalker, Esq.**, Atlantic City Electric Company
- Michael Martello, Esq.**, Jersey Central Power & Light Company
- Stacey Mickles, Esq.**, Public Service Electric and Gas Company
- Felice Segura, Esq.**, Rockland Electric Company
- Stephen R. Bishop, Esq.**, New Jersey American Water Company
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- Jay Kooper, Esq.**, Middlesex Water Company
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- Eric Olsen**, Shore Water Company
- Frank Demore**, Fayson Lakes Water Company
- Wendy Stewart**, Atlantic City Sewer Company
- Justin Kersey**, Montague Water Company
- Jeffrey Fuller**, Lake Lenape Water Company
- Elan Schwarz**, Mt. Olive Villages Water Company

BY THE BOARD:

By this Decision and Order, and in accordance with L. 2025, c. 145, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board" or "BPU") considers directing the State's investor-owned electric, water, and wastewater companies ("Utilities") to implement a "Summer Termination Program" ("STP") that protects eligible residential customers from service discontinuance during the summer months.

BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On September 24, 2025, Acting Governor Tahesha Way signed L. 2025, c. 145 into law (“Act”). The Act directs the Board to establish an STP for public utilities that provide electric, sewer, or water service.¹ The Act directs the Board to promulgate rules and regulations to establish an STP that prohibits discontinuance of such services from June 15 through August 31 each year (“STP Period”), requires restoration of service without reconnection fees, and mandates that Utilities discuss deferred payment arrangements with participants in arrears.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Because a formal rulemaking proceeding establishing the terms of a permanent STP will not be complete before the 2026 summer months, to comply with the Act, Board Staff (“Staff”) recommends the Board implement a temporary STP, thereby requiring the Utilities to comply with the following requirements from June 15, 2026 through August 31, 2026:²

- 1) A public utility shall not discontinue electric, sewer, or water service during the period of June 15 through August 31 to a residential customer deemed eligible for the STP. Eligible customers include any customer who meets one or more of the categorical eligibility criteria for the Board’s WTP, pursuant to the Board’s administrative rules at N.J.A.C. 14:3-3A.5. These eligible categories include:
 - a. Recipients of benefits under the Lifeline Credit Program;
 - b. Recipients of benefits under the Federal Home Energy Assistance Program (“HEAP”);
 - c. Recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families;
 - d. Recipients of Federal Supplemental Security Income;
 - e. Recipients of Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled;
 - f. Recipients of General Assistance benefits;
 - g. Recipients of the Universal Service Fund;
 - h. Applicants of the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program or any other State, local, or utility program that provides assistance or discounted rates specifically to help eligible customers pay wastewater or water bills that may exist at that time; or
 - i. Residential customers who are unable to pay their utility bills due to circumstances beyond their control which shall include, but not be limited to, unemployment, illness, medical expenses, recent death of an immediate family member, and any other circumstances which might cause financial hardship. These customers should be permitted to self-certify by directly contacting their Utility or the Board’s Division of Customer Assistance.

- 2) A residential customer who is eligible for and seeks utility shutoff protections under the STP, and whose electric, sewer, or water service has been terminated for nonpayment prior to June 15, shall have their service restored by their Utility no later than June 15, and no reconnection fee shall be charged.

¹ Codified at N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-31 to -32 and N.J.S.A. 48:2-29.56b.

² Where not specified, the Utilities should follow the existing regulations regarding the Winter Termination Program (“WTP”), where applicable.

- 3) Prior to restoring service to an STP customer, a Utility may verify that the residential customer continues to reside in or occupy the place of residence for which service was terminated for nonpayment.
- 4) During the period of June 15 through August 31, each Utility shall discuss a deferred payment arrangement with its residential customers who participate in the STP and are in arrears. All STP customers shall make good-faith payments during the STP period, if they are able to do so.
- 5) The Utility shall refer to the Board for resolution of all disputes regarding the appropriate amount of down payment. Until the Board has rendered a determination in such an instance, the Utility shall not unilaterally discontinue service during the STP Period.
- 6) If a customer receives financial assistance, such as HEAP heating benefits, the customer shall forward all benefits to their electric, water, or wastewater utility.
- 7) During the period June 15 through August 31, the Utilities shall promote the STP to residential customers in the forms including, but not limited to, email, the Utility's website, billing inserts, and frequent social media posts. The Utilities will send STP factsheets to residential customers in danger of disconnection during the STP period. Each electric, water, and wastewater utility shall submit drafts of their proposed fact sheets to Staff no later than June 8, 2026, for approval for use during the upcoming STP Period. The Utilities shall have conditional approval to use their submitted fact sheets for implementation on June 15, subject to approval by Staff.
- 8) During the STP Period, the Utilities shall not request a security deposit or an addition to an existing security deposit from a customer who is eligible for and seeks the protection of the STP.
- 9) The STP requirements shall not apply to shutoffs of service to a residential customer who is eligible for utility shutoff protections under the STP due to a utility emergency.
- 10) The Utilities may terminate service to a residential customer who is eligible for STP if the customer connects, disconnects, or otherwise tampers with the meters, pipes, wires, or conduits of the utility for the purpose of obtaining electric, water, and wastewater service without payment. No discontinuance shall occur until the customer has been afforded all reasonable due process considerations in accordance with all applicable law.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

After careful review of the Act and the Board's existing Winter Termination Program rules, the Board **HEREBY FINDS** that Staff's recommended requirements for a temporary STP pending enactment of permanent STP rules are reasonable and in accordance with the law.

The Board **HEREBY FINDS** that a proposed STP rulemaking will provide the public with the opportunity to comment on the STP program so that the STP rules can address any issues not specified in the Act or detailed herein.³

³ Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 48:2-29.56b the Board shall establish a Summer Termination Program ("STP"). The Board, in a companion item on this agenda, is issuing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking establishing a STP.

Based on the foregoing, the Board **HEREBY DIRECTS** the Utilities to follow the STP requirements as detailed above and provide their plans for compliance to the Board's Division of Customer Assistance no later than June 8, 2026.

The effective date of this Order is May 26, 2026.

DATED: May 21, 2026

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
BY:



CHRISTINE GUHL-SADOVY
PRESIDENT



DR. ZENON CHRISTODOULOU
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MICHAEL BANGE
COMMISSIONER

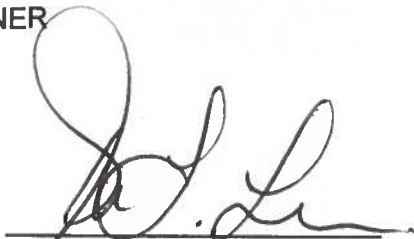


EMMA REBHORN
COMMISSIONER



JOSEPH COVIELLO
COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:



SHERRI L. LEWIS
BOARD SECRETARY

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the within
document is a true copy of the original
in the files of the Board of Public Utilities.

IN THE MATTER OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES' SUMMER TERMINATION PROGRAM

BPU DOCKET NO. AX26040108

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