



STATE OF NEW JERSEY COVID-19 ALERT

March 20, 2020

ALL WATER PROVIDERS ASKED TO SUSPEND SHUT-OFFS DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

A Joint Statement from:

Lt. Governor and Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Sheila Y. Oliver
NJ Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe
NJ Board of Public Utilities President Joseph L. Fiordaliso

As we all know, the provision of water is an essential public service, especially now.

Critical for both our health and personal hygiene, consistent access to safe water is especially vital to New Jersey's response to the unprecedented public health emergency created by the spread by COVID-19.

Frequent and vigorous handwashing is critical in limiting the spread of COVID-19 and all New Jerseyans should have confidence that water will be available when they open the tap to wash their hands. Access to clean water is also an important part of many other health and hygiene functions as we all work to protect public health. At a time where many services that we may take for granted are temporarily unavailable, New Jerseyans deserve the comfort and continuity of uninterrupted water service.

It is incumbent upon each of us in government and industry to keep water flowing into every home and business during this crisis.

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Department of Environmental Protection and Board of Public Utilities are therefore asking that every water system, private or public, including those operated by our municipal governments, commit to a suspension of any water shut offs for reasons of non-payment, safe reconnection of anyone previously shut off, and a suspension of the use of liens as a collection practice until the outbreak of COVID-19 has subsided. We are asking that every water system send the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) its commitment, via email, to KeepWaterOn@dep.nj.gov.

The Murphy Administration thanks those water providers, including the Newark Water Department, Trenton Water Works, New Jersey American Water, and Suez, that have already publicly made this commitment. We are grateful for your leadership and partnership during this challenging time.

All of us appreciate that water providers are working swiftly to ensure that their staffs remain healthy and that their systems are operational during this public health emergency. Please continue to work with **DEP's Division of Water Supply & Geoscience** and **Division of Water Compliance & Enforcement** and frequently consult the guidance and resources that are being posted on their websites.

We are all in this together, and we are confident that we will emerge strong from this crisis if we continue to take good care of ourselves, and each other.

