

**NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION****REPORT ON MANDATORY COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY MONTHLY  
REPORTING FOR THE MONTH ENDED AUGUST 31, 2021****Docket No. M-100, Sub 158****Tuesday, November 2, 2021**

On July 29, 2020, the North Carolina Utilities Commission (Commission) issued an order lifting the disconnection moratorium it had placed on jurisdictional utilities regulated by the Commission at the outset of the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to lifting the moratorium, the order also set minimum requirements for the establishment of repayment plans for arrearages that had occurred during the moratorium and required utilities to submit monthly monitoring reports on a range of metrics.

On September 9, 2020, the Commission issued an order finalizing the COVID-19 State of Emergency Monthly Reporting Form and excluded resellers and Class C water and wastewater public utilities from the mandatory reporting requirement.

On February 23, 2021, the Commission issued an order applicable to the seven largest electricity, natural gas, and water utilities: Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC (DEC); Duke Energy Progress, LLC (DEP); Virginia Electric and Power Company, d/b/a Dominion Energy North Carolina (DENC); Public Service Company of North Carolina, Inc.; Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc.; Aqua North Carolina, Inc.; and Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North Carolina, which suspended disconnections due to nonpayment, through March 31, 2021, for certain vulnerable residential customers (Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium). Particularly, residential customers whose households were eligible to receive assistance from the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), Crisis Intervention Program (CIP), or the North Carolina Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (NC HOPE) Program were eligible for the limited residential disconnection moratorium. The Commission's February 23, 2021 Order further provided for extended special repayment plans for these vulnerable residential customers (no fewer than 18 months) and also required that service disconnect door-hangers be placed at all residences within 24 to 36 hours prior to disconnection, advising residential customers of their options to avoid disconnection.

On March 23, 2021, the Commission issued an order extending the door hanger notice requirement through June 30, 2021.

On April 5, 2021, the Commission issued an order reinstating the Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium through June 30, 2021. The order further required the Public Staff to file a monthly report regarding total complaints by utility received by the Public Staff's Consumer Services Division.

On June 30, 2021, the Commission's Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium and the door hanger notice requirement expired. To date, a late fee moratorium, pursuant to the Commission's March 19, 2020 Order Suspending Utility Disconnections for Non-Payment, Allowing Reconnection, and Waiving Certain Fees, and the July 29, 2020 Order Lifting Disconnection Moratorium and Allowing Collection of Arrearages Pursuant to Special Repayment Plans, remains in effect as to all jurisdictional electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater public utilities, including resellers, through the end of the State of Emergency or until further order of the Commission.

For the period August 1, 2021, through August 31, 2021, 37 utilities submitted reports (see Appendix A for a full list of utilities submitting reports). Of the 37 utilities that reported, five are electricity providers, three are natural gas providers, and 29 are providers of water and/or wastewater services.

### Accounts Past Due

The reporting jurisdictional utilities reported that, as of August 31, 2021, an aggregate of \$241,101,714 in residential and nonresidential customer arrearages were 30 or more days past due (\$41,174,768 more than the amount of arrears reported as of July 31, 2021). Of the reported amount this month, approximately 89.8% or \$216,605,929 is attributable to the three largest investor-owned electric utilities – DEC, DEP, and DENC. Table 1 shows a summary of arrearages and past due accounts for each type of utility service.

Table 1: Summary of Arrearages and Past Due Accounts					
Utility Service Provided	Number of Utilities Responding	Active Customer Accounts	Number of Past Due Accounts	Percent Past Due	Total Amount Past Due <sup>1</sup>
Electricity	5	3,739,268	738,970	19.8%	\$216,678,714
Natural Gas	3	1,411,988	161,074	11.4%	\$22,482,913
Water and Wastewater	29	192,310	8,605	4.5%	\$1,940,087

### Disconnections and Reconnections

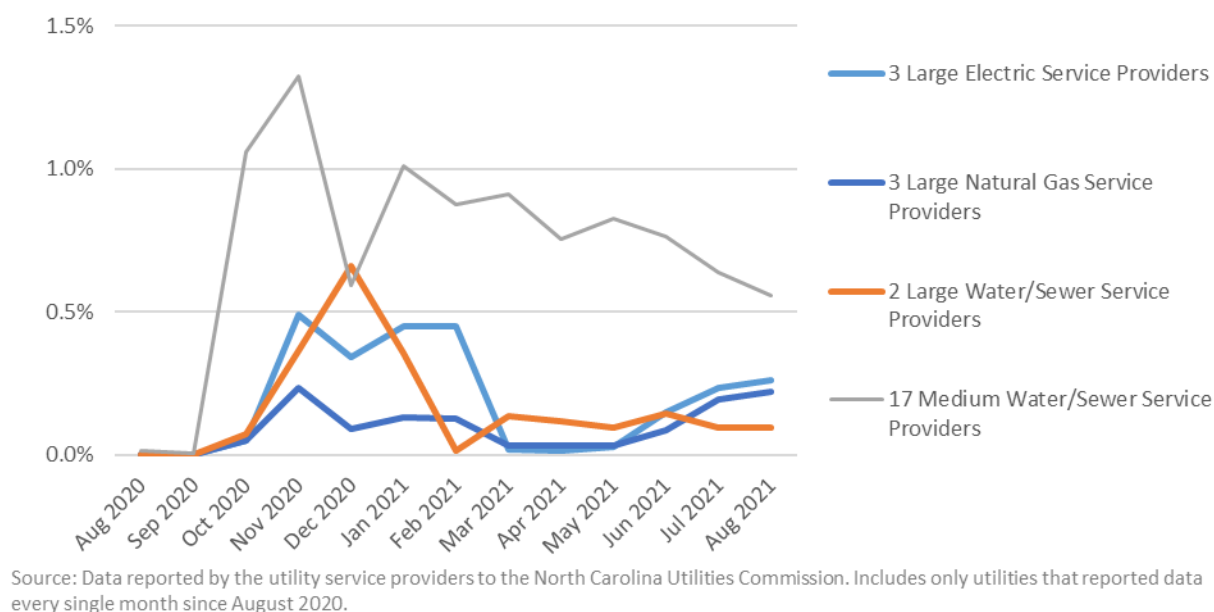
Utilities reported carrying out 13,346 disconnections during the month of August, with 7,475 (56%) of these accounts being reconnected within 24 hours. DEP has historically reported the highest number of disconnected accounts for non-payment since utilities began reporting to the Commission in August of 2020. This trend continued in July 2021 with DEP reporting that it had carried out 8,748 disconnections on customer accounts. DEP accounted for 65.5% of the aggregate disconnections across all sectors

<sup>1</sup> The survey form defined past due amounts as unpaid balances 30 days and older.

during the month of August. Of the accounts that DEP disconnected in August, 6,596 (75.4%) were reconnected within 24 hours.

As of August 31, 2021, the percentage of accounts disconnected for non-payment remains low. Large electric, natural gas, and water/wastewater service providers all reported disconnecting less than 0.2% of active accounts, on average, as seen in Figure 1.

#### Percentage of Accounts Disconnected for Non-Payment (including Reconnected Accounts)



*Figure 1: Percentage of accounts disconnected for large utilities*

#### Trends and Future Outlook

As of July 31, 2021, many customers are behind on their bills with most utilities experiencing 7% - 14% of their overall accounts past due. On average, large electric service providers reported the highest percentage of accounts as past due at 14% as of July 31, 2021. Large natural gas utilities reported 11.1% of their accounts as past due, and large water/sewer utilities reported 6.3% of their accounts as past due in July of 2021. Large electric, natural gas, and water/wastewater service providers all experienced lower percentages of accounts past due in July 2021 than they did when the Commission initially began collecting data in August of 2020.

Between July and August, utilities across all sectors reported a decrease in the percentage of accounts on repayment plans at the end of the month. While the percentage of accounts on repayment plans decreased in August, the average balance on repayment plans increased for large electric service providers and remained relatively stable for large water/sewer and natural gas service providers when compared to July levels. All large utilities reported an average balance on repayment plans between \$380 and \$480, with large natural gas service providers reporting the highest average balance

on repayment plans at the end of August. As of August 2021, fewer than 3.5% of active electric customer accounts are enrolled in special repayment plans. Large natural gas and water/wastewater service providers had fewer than 1.5% of their active accounts enrolled in special repayment plans in August. Large natural gas and water/wastewater service providers have reported a repayment plan enrollment lower than 2% each month since the Commission began collecting data in August 2020.

Disconnections have increased since June 2021 for electric and natural gas service providers. Despite this recent increase, disconnections remain relatively low with natural gas and electric utilities reporting 0.2% of accounts being disconnected in August 2021. Of these disconnected accounts, a majority (81.3%) were reconnected within 24 hours for electric service providers. For comparison, only 20% of natural gas disconnections were reconnected within 24 hours. The percentage of accounts disconnected by the large water/wastewater service providers remains lower than the percentage of accounts disconnected by electric and natural gas utilities. The percentage of water/wastewater accounts disconnected for non-payment has been decreasing since June 2021. See Appendix B for more information on these and other payment and disconnection trends.

#### Additional Information

This report, as well as the raw data reported by the jurisdictional utilities, will be filed in NCUC Docket No. M-100, Sub 158, which is publicly available on the Commission's website: [www.ncuc.net](http://www.ncuc.net). Please contact Sam Ingalls at [singalls@ncuc.net](mailto:singalls@ncuc.net) if you have any questions or if you would like to be provided with any additional information.

## Appendix A

	Utility Service Provider Name	Utility Service
1	Albemarle Plantation Utility Company, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
2	A & D Water Service, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
3	Aqua North Carolina, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
4	Bay Tree Utility Company	Water and/or Wastewater
5	Beacons Reach Master Association, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
6	Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North Carolina	Water and/or Wastewater
7	Corriher Water Service	Water and/or Wastewater
8	Cross-State Development Corporation	Water and/or Wastewater
9	Dominion Energy North Carolina	Electric
10	Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC	Electric
11	Duke Energy Progress, LLC	Electric
12	Enviro-Tech of North Carolina, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
13	Fearrington Utilities	Water and/or Wastewater
14	Frontier Natural Gas Company	Natural Gas
15	Gensinger; John	Water and/or Wastewater
16	GGCC Utility, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
17	Ginguite Woods Water Reclamation Association, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
18	HH Water, LLC	Water and/or Wastewater
19	Harrco Utility Corporation	Water and/or Wastewater
20	JL Golf Management, LLC	Water and/or Wastewater
21	KRJ, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
22	Lake Junaluska Assembly, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
23	Meadowlands Development, LLC	Water and/or Wastewater
24	Mountain Air Utilities Corporation	Water and/or Wastewater
25	New River Light and Power Company	Electric
26	Old North State Water Company, LLC	Water and/or Wastewater
27	Old North Utility Services, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater
28	Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc.	Natural Gas
29	Pluris Hampstead, LLC	Water and/or Wastewater
30	Pluris Webb Creek, LLC	Water and/or Wastewater
31	Pluris, LLC	Water and/or Wastewater
32	Public Service Company of North Carolina, Inc.	Natural Gas
33	Sandler Utilities At Mill Run LLC	Water and/or Wastewater
34	Scientific Water and Sewerage Corporation	Water and/or Wastewater
35	Total Environmental Solutions, Inc	Water and/or Wastewater
36	Western Carolina University	Electric
37	Clarke Utilities, Inc.	Water and/or Wastewater

## **Appendix B**

The Impact of COVID 19 on Commission Regulated Utilities



# The Impact of COVID 19 on Commission Regulated Utilities – August 2021

November 1, 2021

Assistance with data analysis and visualization provided by the UNC Environmental Finance Center [www.efc.sog.unc.edu](http://www.efc.sog.unc.edu)

# SUMMARY OF NCUC COVID-19 RESPONSE

- **March 10, 2020:** Governor Cooper issues Executive Order (EO) No. 116 declaring state of emergency to coordinate response and protective actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- **March 19, 2020:** NCUC issues Order Suspending Utility Disconnections for Non-Payment, Allowing Reconnection, and Waiving Certain Fees
- **March 31, 2020:** Governor Cooper issues EO No. 124 prohibiting utilities – including electric, gas, water and wastewater services – from disconnecting customers unable to pay during the COVID-19 pandemic and from collecting fees, penalties, or interest for late payments. EO No. 124 also required public utilities to report implementation information weekly to the Commission.
- **May 30, 2020:** Governor Cooper issues EO No. 142 extending the disconnect moratorium until 11:59 pm on July 29, 2020, and required public utilities to continue to report implementation information to the Commission, now on a monthly basis.
- **July 29, 2020:** NCUC issues Order Lifting Disconnection Moratorium and Allowing Collection of Arrearages Pursuant to Special Repayment Plans in Docket No. M-100, Sub 158; EO No. 124 expires
  - Resumes customer disconnections beginning on September 1, 2020, for bills mailed after September 1<sup>st</sup> and pursuant to existing notice requirements
  - Late fee moratorium remains in effect “through the end of the State of Emergency or until further order of the Commission”
  - Allows collection of arrearages pursuant to repayment plans (12 months unless a customer agrees to fewer)
  - Encourages leniency during the state of emergency
- **September 9, 2020:** NCUC finalizes COVID-19 State of Emergency Monthly Reporting Form, which all jurisdictional electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater public utilities, excluding resellers and Class C water and wastewater public utilities, must submit to the Commission on a monthly basis

# SUMMARY OF NCUC COVID-19 RESPONSE

- **On February 23, 2021:** NCUC issues Order Suspending Disconnections and Providing for Extended Special Repayment Plans for Certain Vulnerable Residential Customers and Requiring Door Hanger Notices in Docket No. M-100, Sub 158
  - Applicable to seven large electricity, natural gas, and water utilities
  - Ceases customer disconnections through March 31, 2021, for nonpayment of bills for residential customers who household is eligible to receive assistance (whether funds are then available or not) from LIEAP, CIP, or the North Carolina Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (NC HOPE) Program
  - Requires through March 31, 2020, service disconnect door-hangers be placed at all residences within 24 to 36 hours prior to disconnection, advising residential customers of their options to avoid disconnection
  - Provides for Extended Special Repayment Plans (no fewer than 18 months) for residential customers who household is eligible to receive assistance (whether funds are then available or not) from LIEAP, CIP, or the North Carolina Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (NC HOPE) Program
- **On March 23, 2021:** NCUC issues Order Extending Door Hanger Notice Requirement in Docket No. M-100, Sub 158
  - Applicable to seven large electricity, natural gas, and water utilities
  - Extends through June 30, 2021, the requirement that DEC, DEP, DENC, PNG, PSNC, CWS, and Aqua place a service disconnect door hanger at all residences within 24 to 36 hours prior to disconnection, advising residential customers of their options to avoid disconnection
- **On April 5, 2021:** NCUC issues Order Reinstating Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium
  - Applicable to seven large electricity, natural gas, and water utilities
  - Reinstates the Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium effective immediately through June 30, 2021
  - Requires the Public Staff to file a monthly report regarding the total complaints by utility
  - Requires DEC and DEP to file comments, by no later than April 20, 2021
  - Solicits comments, to be filed by no later than June 15, 2021, responsive to the comments filed by DEC and DEP, and also regarding the progress of the public health and economic recovery and whether further extension of the Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium is necessary
- **On June 30, 2021:** The Commission's Limited Residential Disconnection Moratorium and the door hanger notice requirement expired.



# COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY MONTHLY REPORTING TRENDS

# IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON REGULATED UTILITIES AND CUSTOMERS

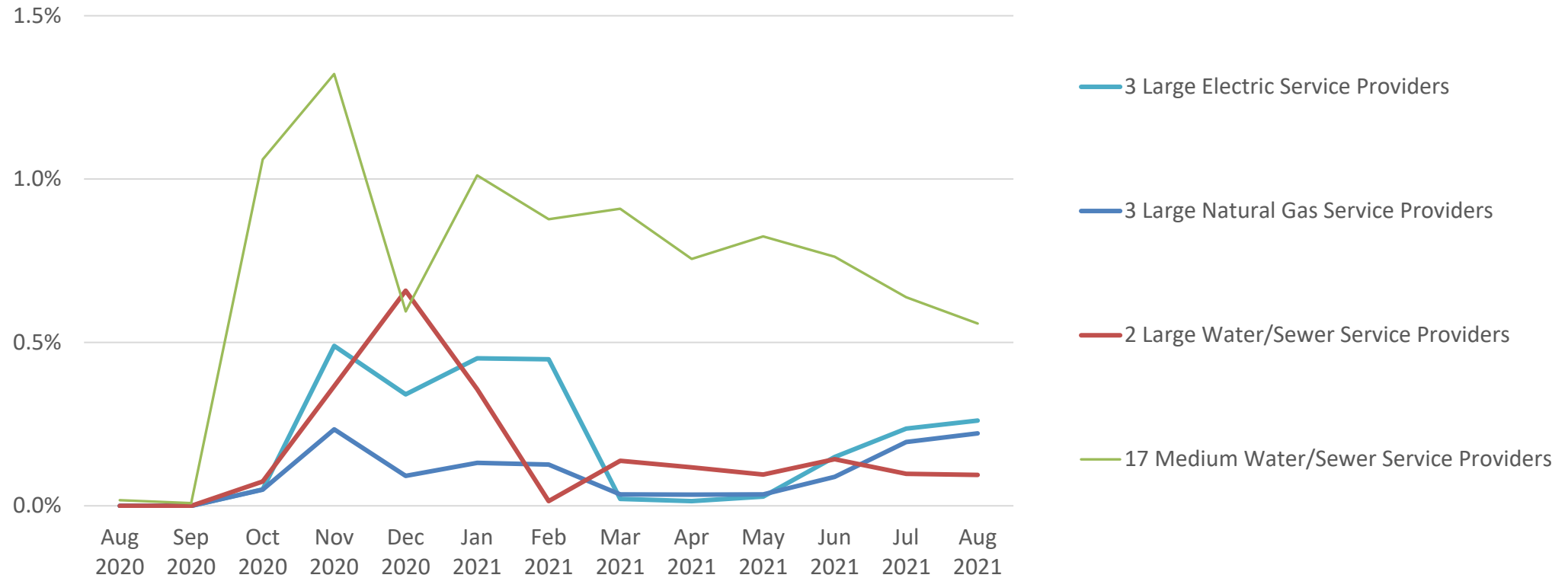
- Many customers are behind on their bills. Most utilities are experiencing 4% - 20% of their overall accounts past due, on average, during the month of August.
- The average arrearages vary in trend over time based on industry and size.
- Average arrearages on past due accounts has remained relatively stagnant over the past several months for the large utilities. In August 2021, all large utilities reported a decrease in average arrears on past due accounts except for large water/sewer service providers, who saw an increase in average arrearages.
- Repayment plan enrollment decreased for large electric, natural gas, and water/sewer service providers in August. Around 1% of large water/sewer service providers have been enrolled on repayment plans since February 2021. The percentage of customers enrolling remains low. There are more enrolled in electric than in the other sectors, but in August 2021, fewer than 4% of electric customers were enrolled.
- The average balance on repayment plans increased, on average, for the large electric service providers and remained the same for large natural gas and water/sewer utilities.
- In August 2021, large electric and natural gas service providers reported an increase in the percentage of accounts that were disconnected for non-payment. Large water/wastewater service providers reported a decrease in percentage of accounts disconnected for non-payment in August. The majority of disconnections ended up being reconnected across all sectors (and most within 24 hours).
- All large utilities had a disconnection rate of under 0.25% during the month of August.



# CUSTOMER DISCONNECTIONS



## Percentage of Accounts Disconnected for Non-Payment (including Reconnected Accounts)

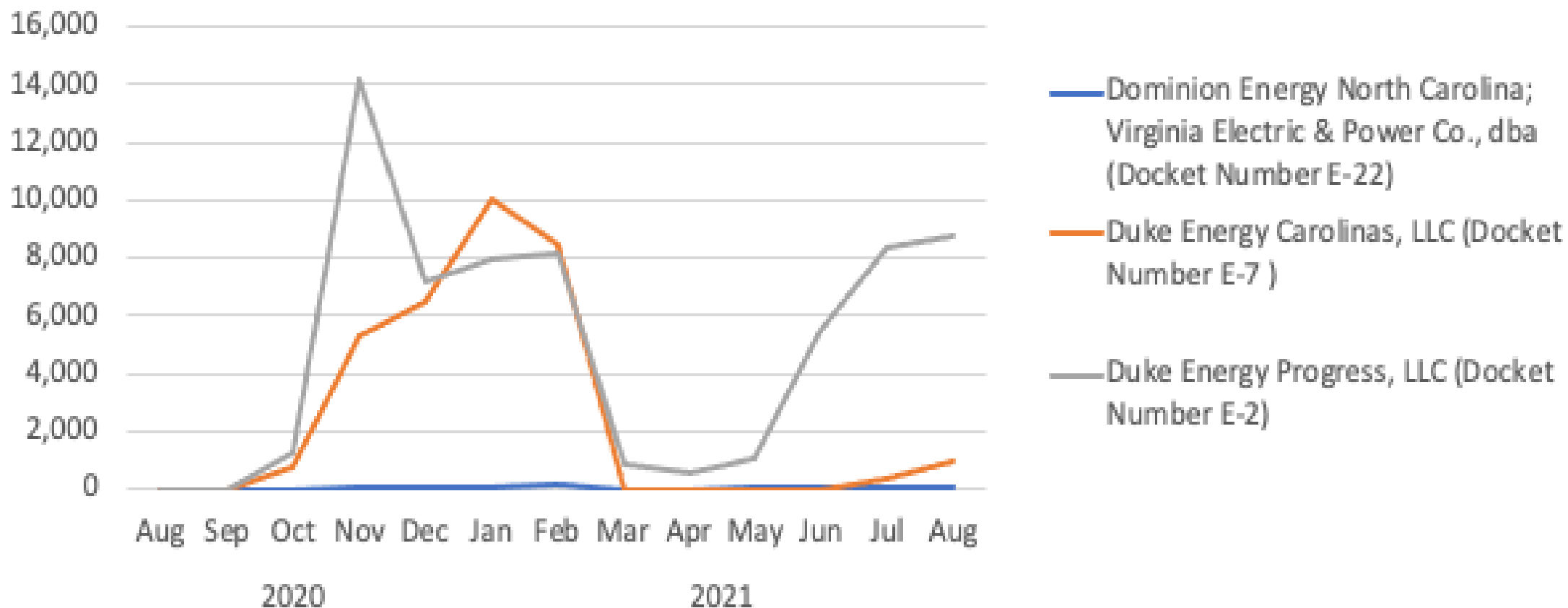


Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. Includes only utilities that reported data every single month since August 2020.

# DISCONNECTIONS BY ELECTRIC UTILITIES



## Number of Accounts Disconnected for Non-Payment (Including Reconnected Accounts)

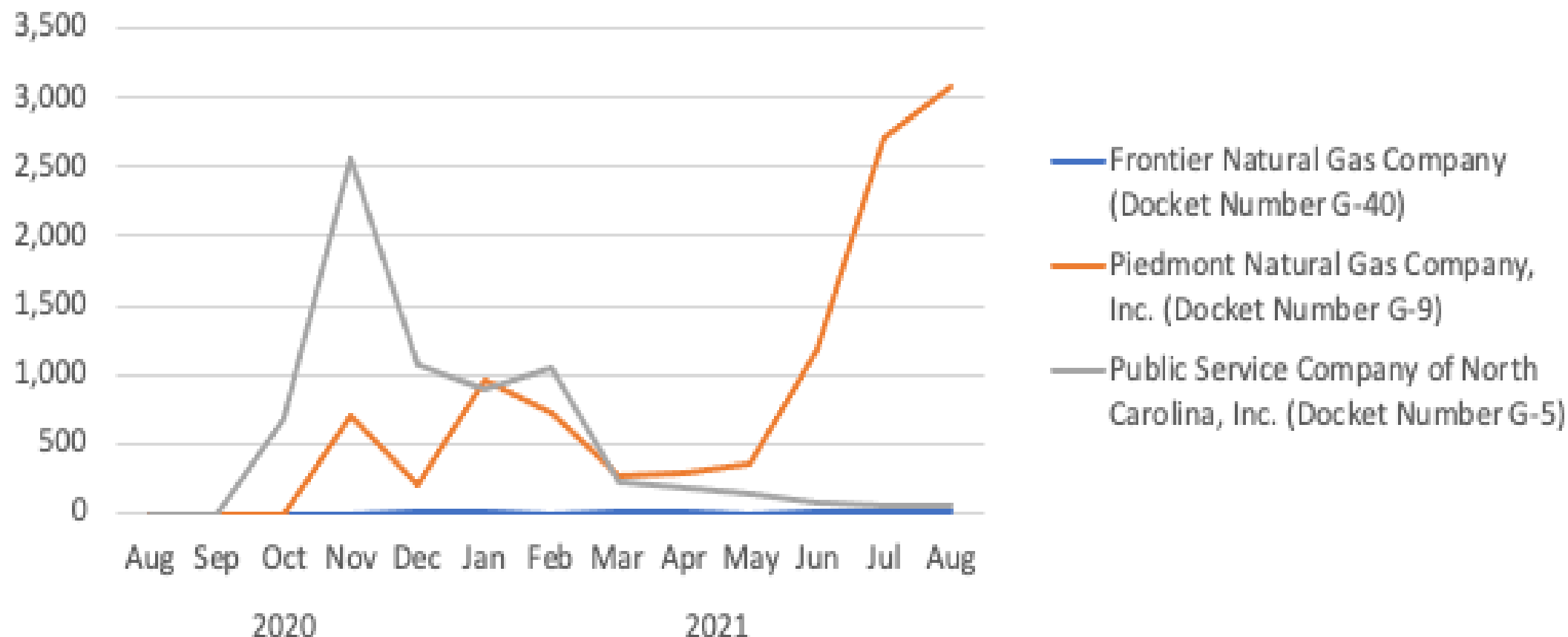


Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

# DISCONNECTIONS BY NATURAL GAS UTILITIES



## Number of Accounts Disconnected for Non-Payment (Including Reconnected Accounts)

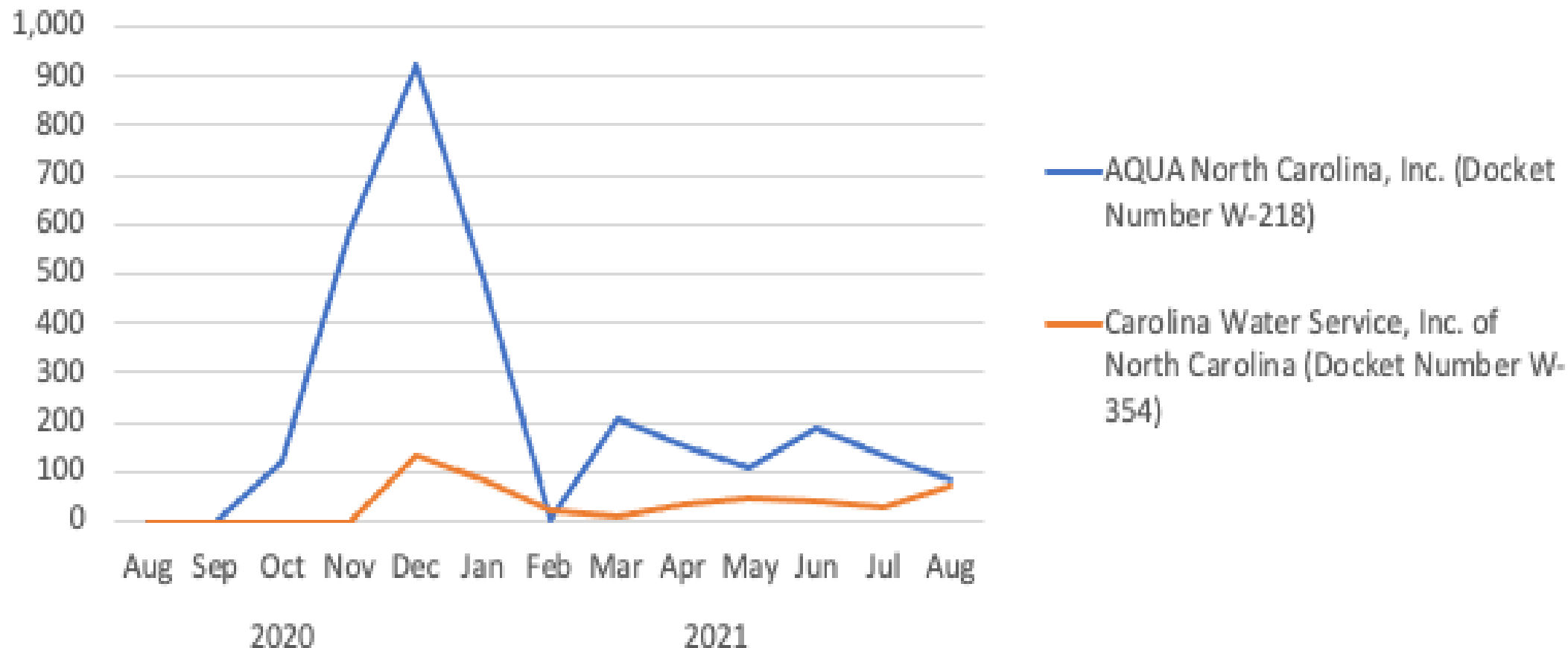


Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



# **DISCONNECTIONS BY WATER & WASTEWATER UTILITIES – LARGEST 2 COMPANIES**

## Number of Accounts Disconnected for Non-Payment (Including Reconnected Accounts)



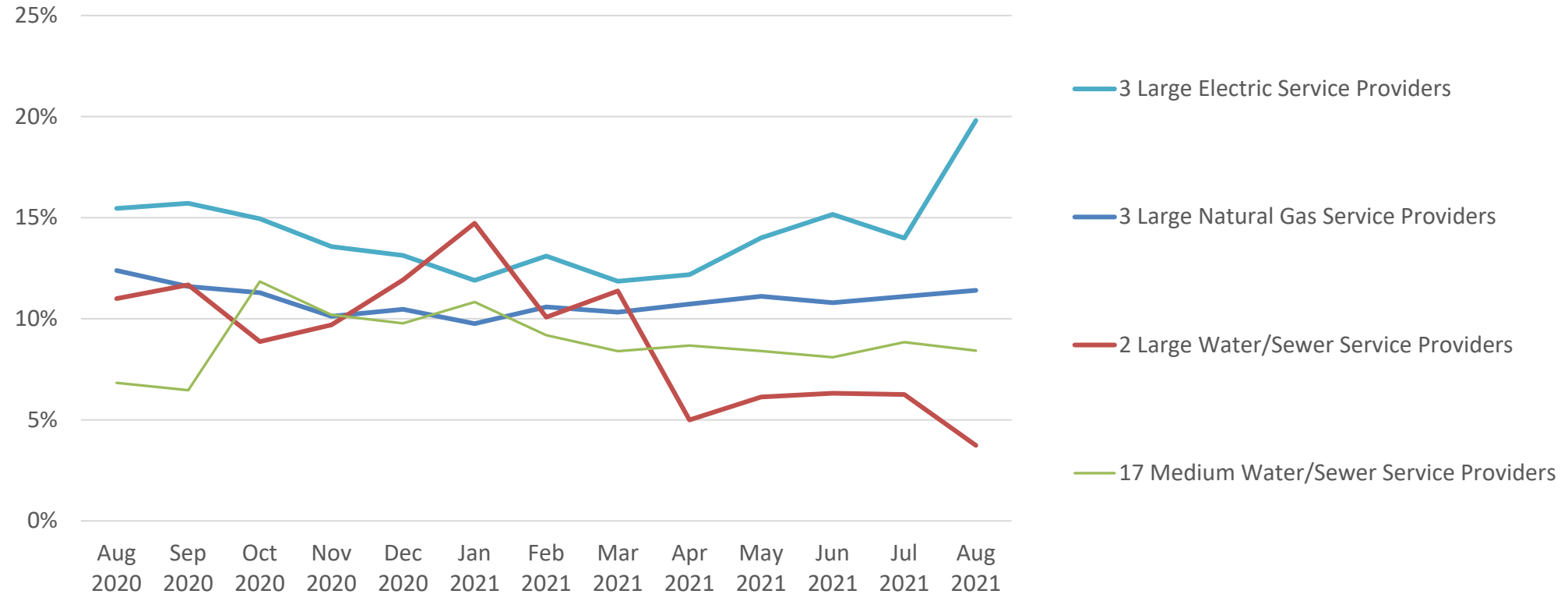
Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



# ARREARAGES

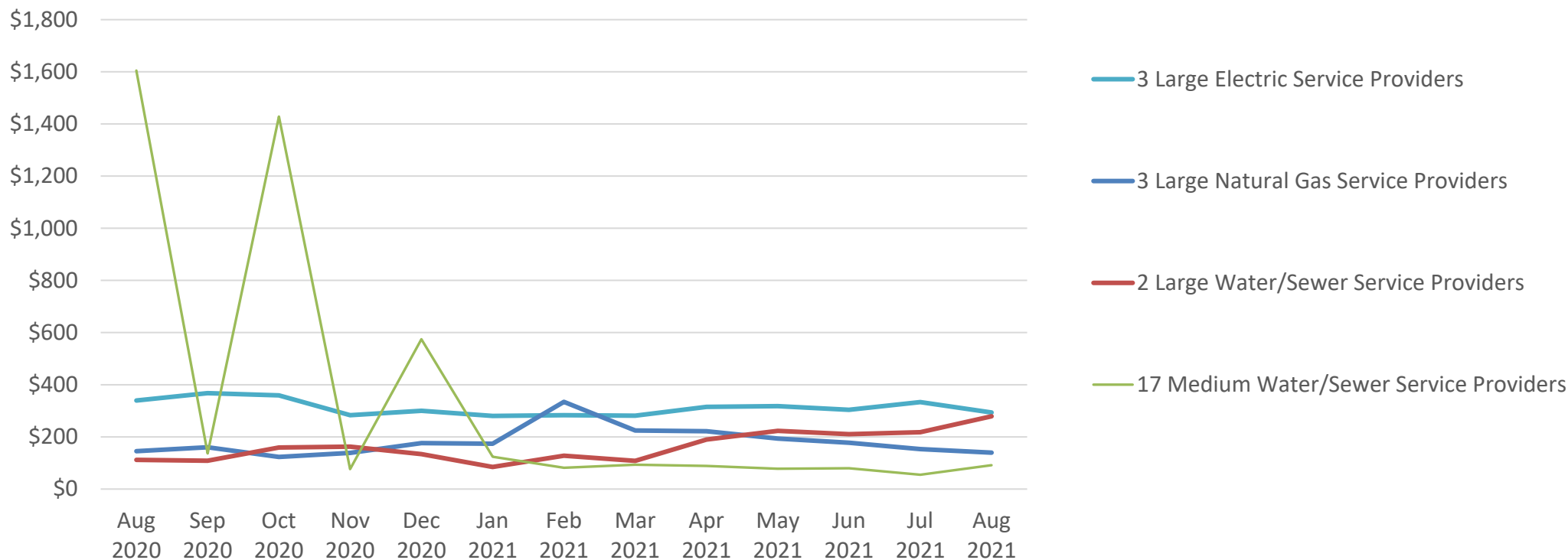


## Percentage of Accounts Considered Past Due at the End of the Month



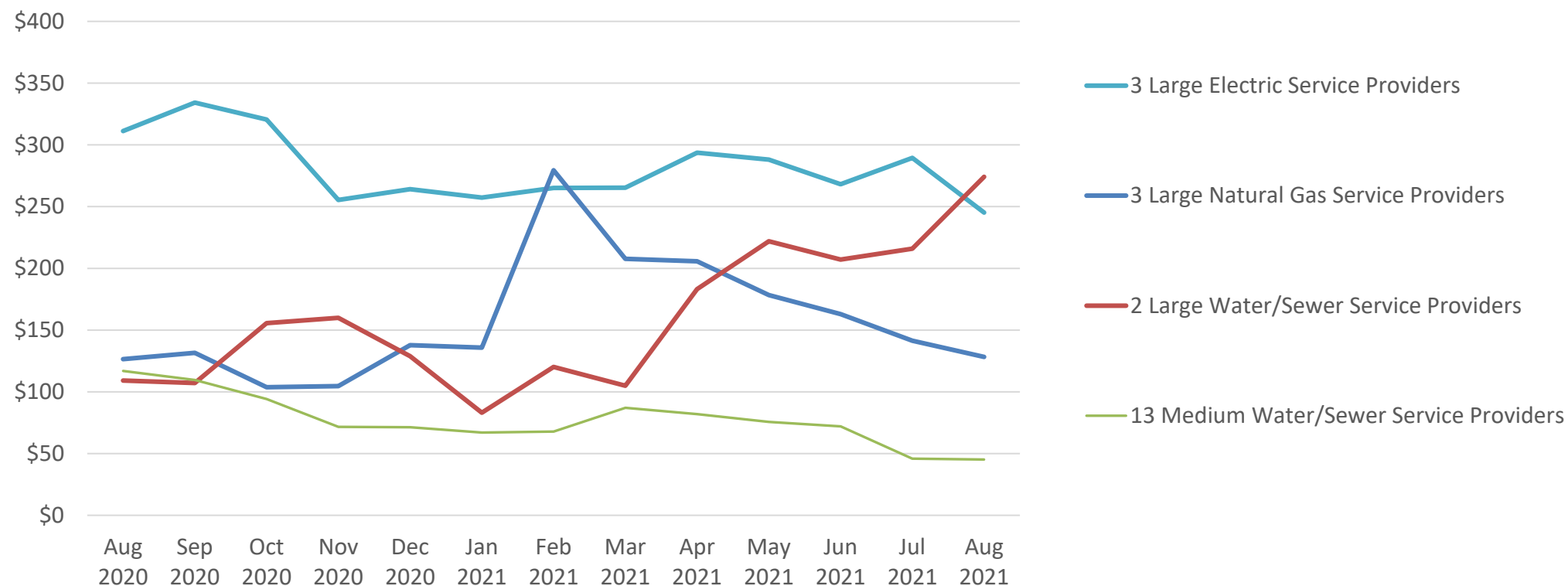
Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. Includes only utilities that reported data every single month since August 2020.

## Average Arrears on Past Due Accounts at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. Includes only utilities that reported data every single month since August 2020.

## Average Arrears on Past Due Accounts at the End of the Month: Residential Accounts Only



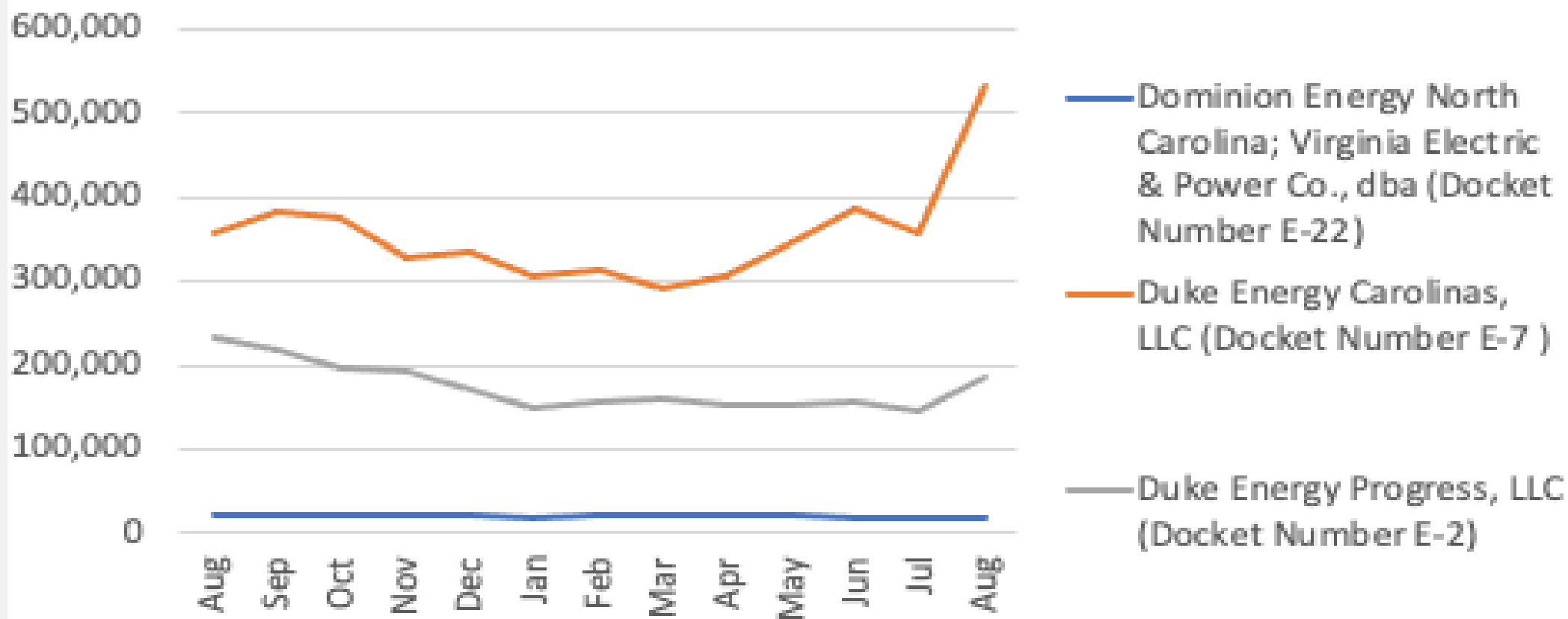
Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. Includes only utilities that reported data every single month since August 2020.



# ELECTRIC UTILITY ARREARAGES



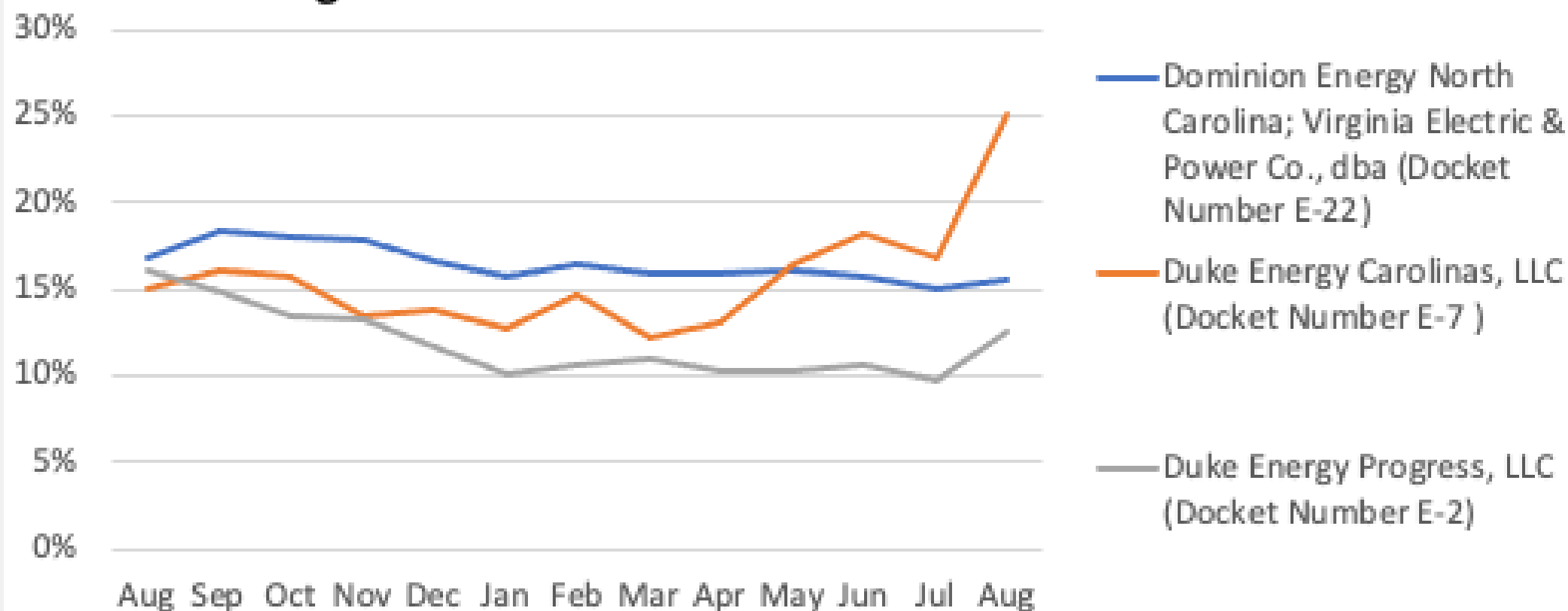
## Number of Accounts Considered Past Due at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by 2020 utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. 2021



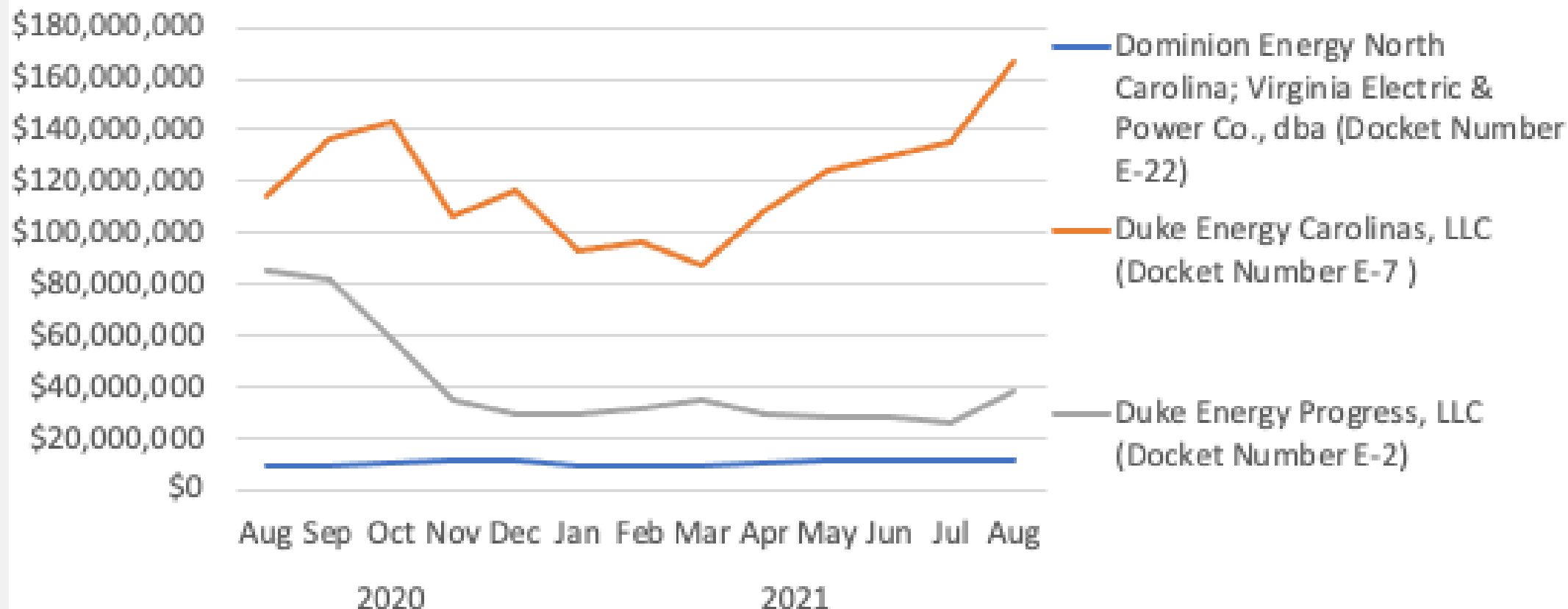
## Percentage of Accounts Considered Past Due at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



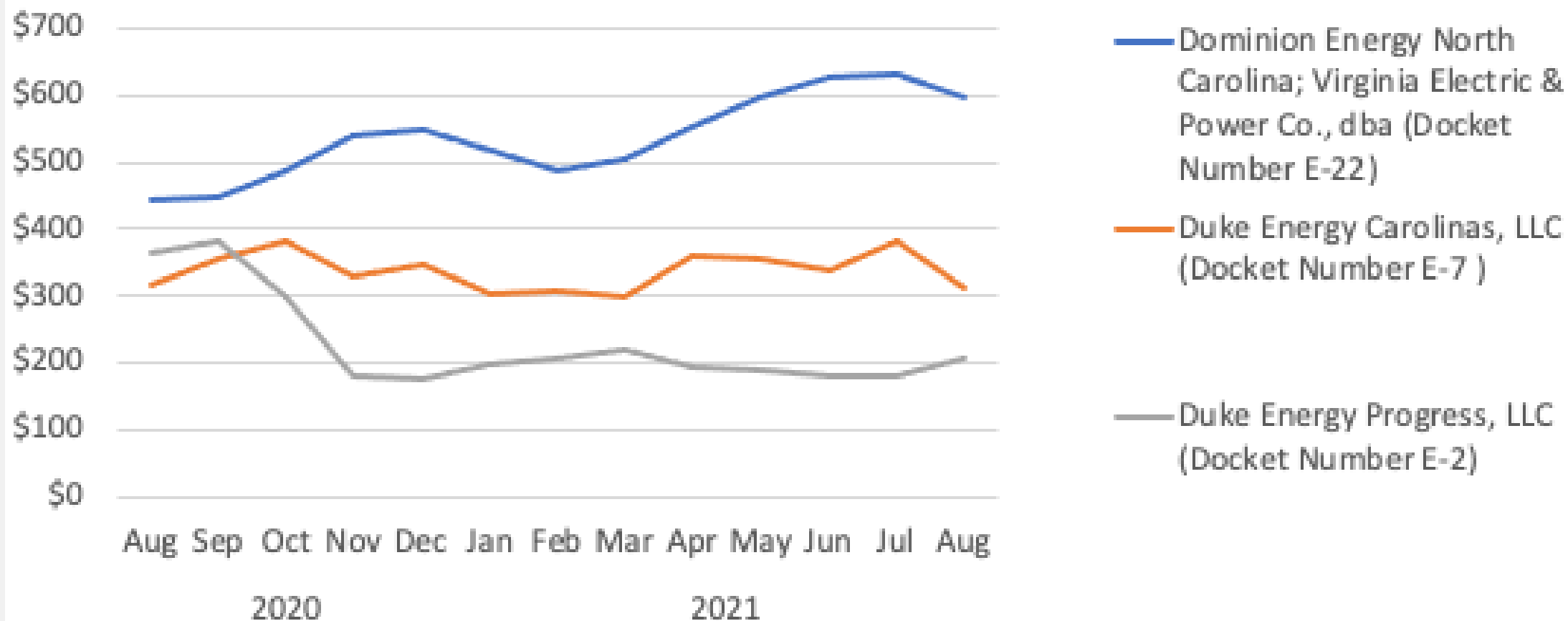
## Total Arrears at Least 30 Days Past Due at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



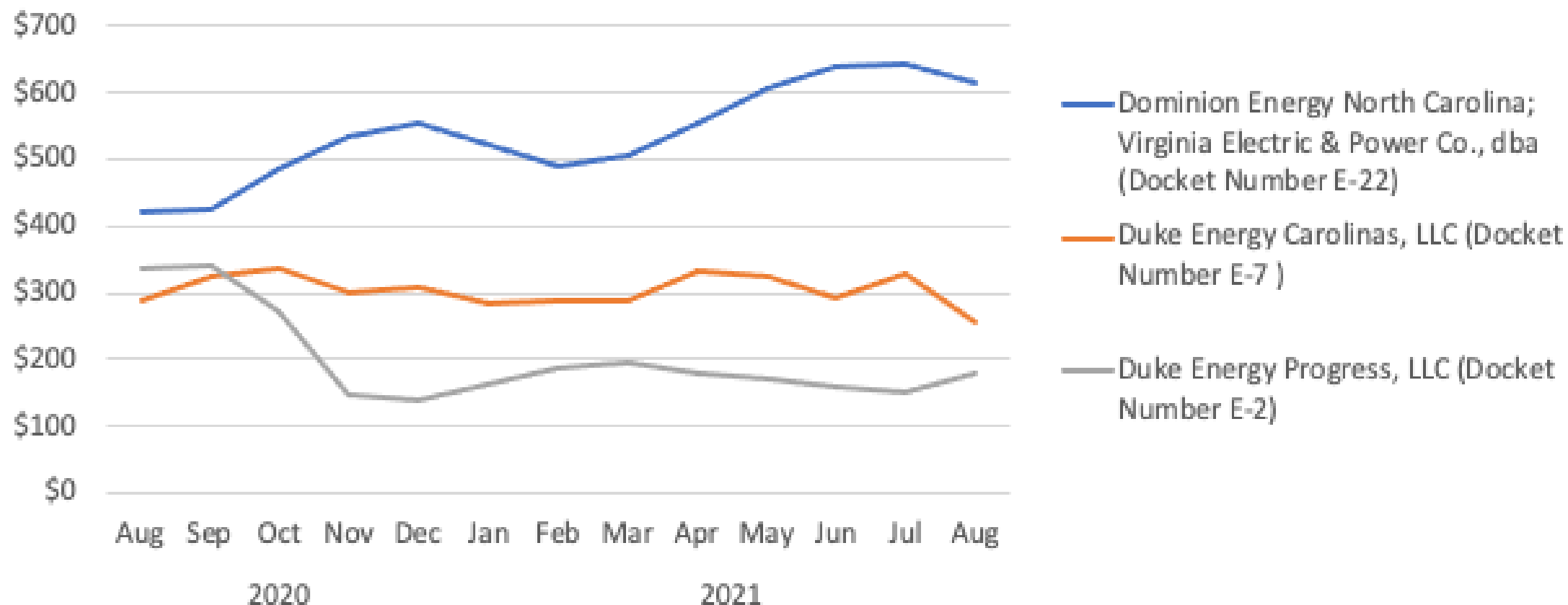
## Average Arrears on Past Due Accounts at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



## Average Arrears on Past Due Accounts at the End of the Month: Residential Accounts Only

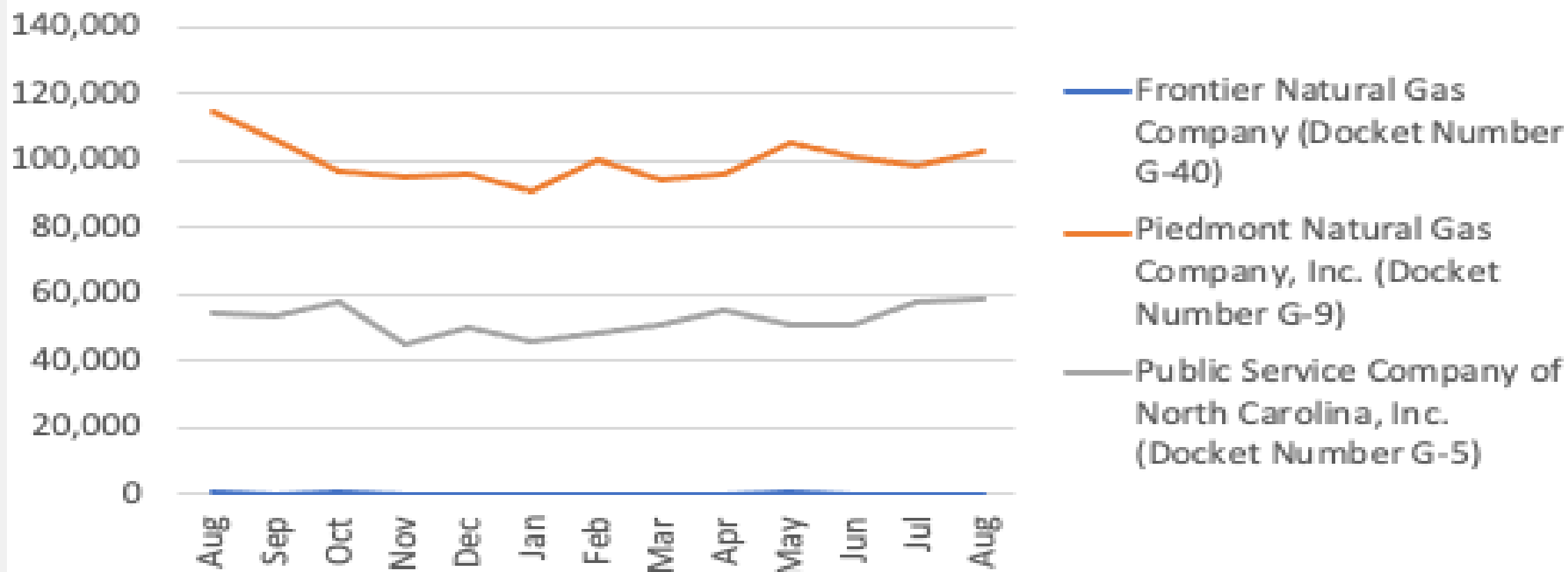


Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

# NATURAL GAS UTILITY ARREARAGES



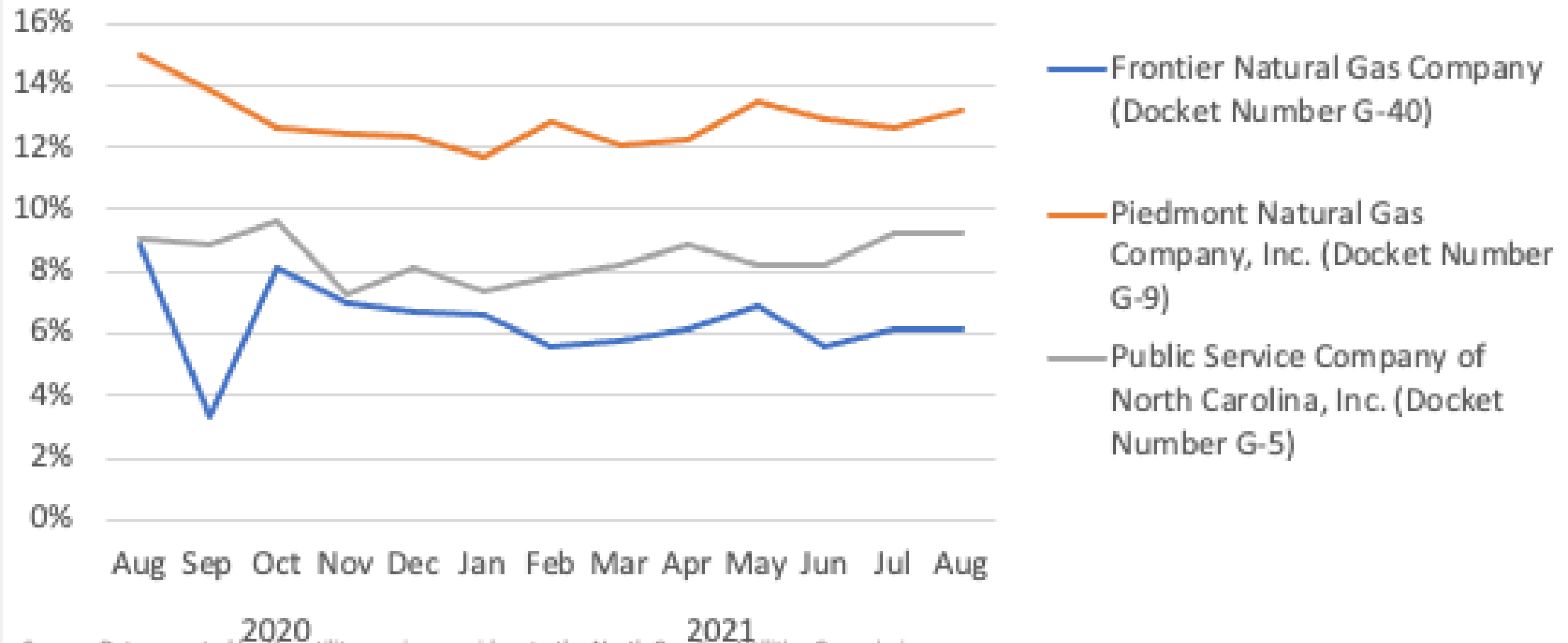
## Number of Accounts Considered Past Due at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



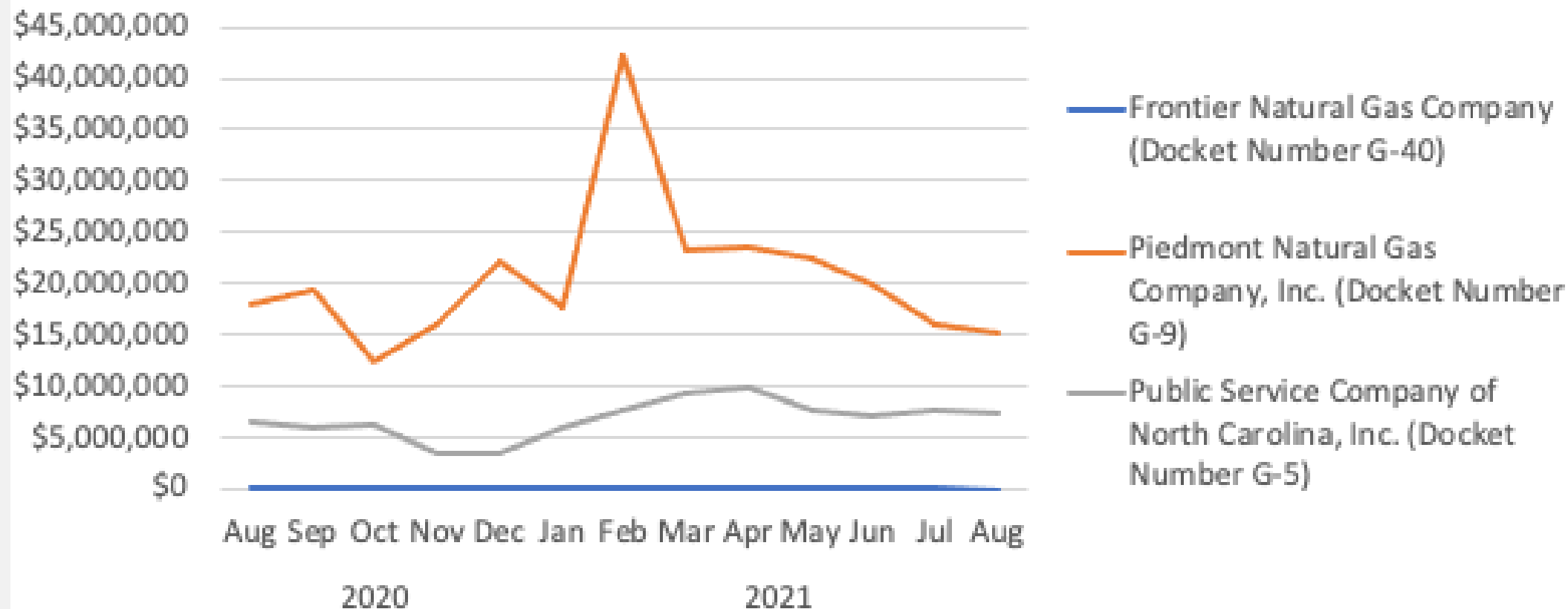
## Percentage of Accounts Considered Past Due at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



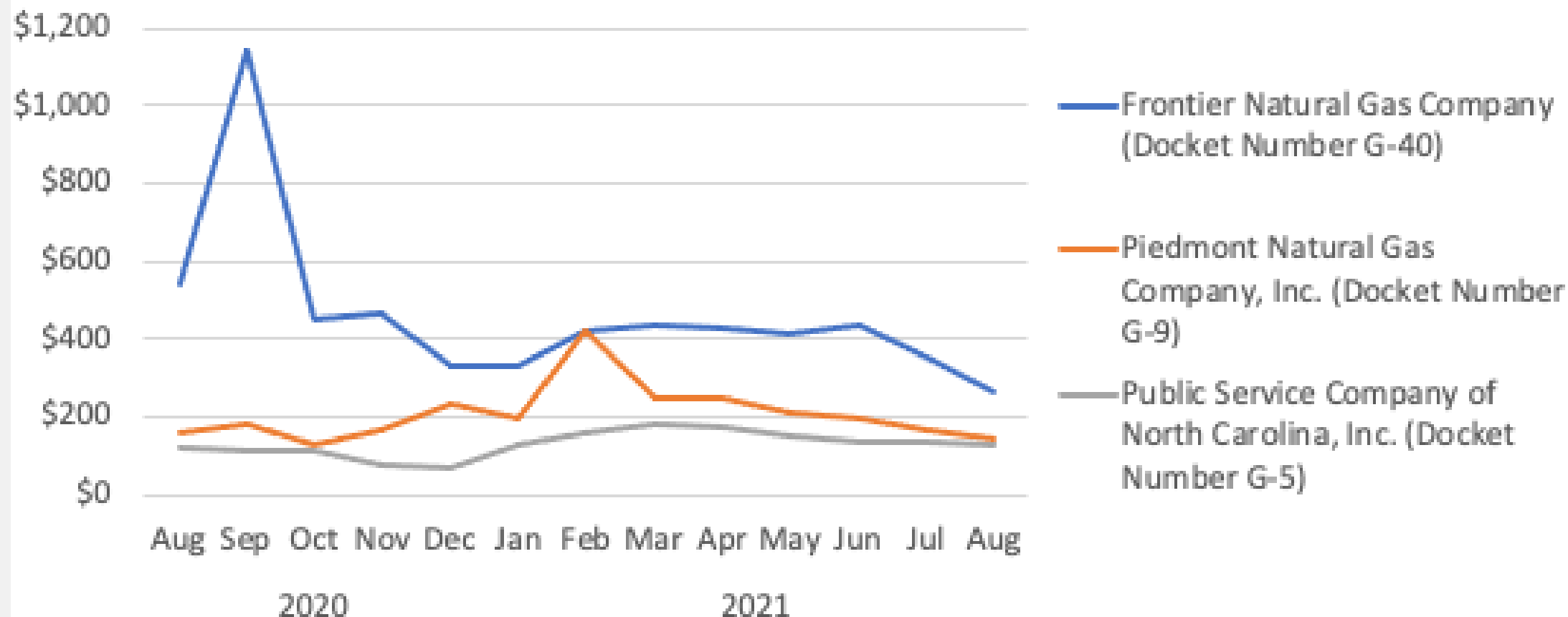
## Total Arrears at Least 30 Days Past Due at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



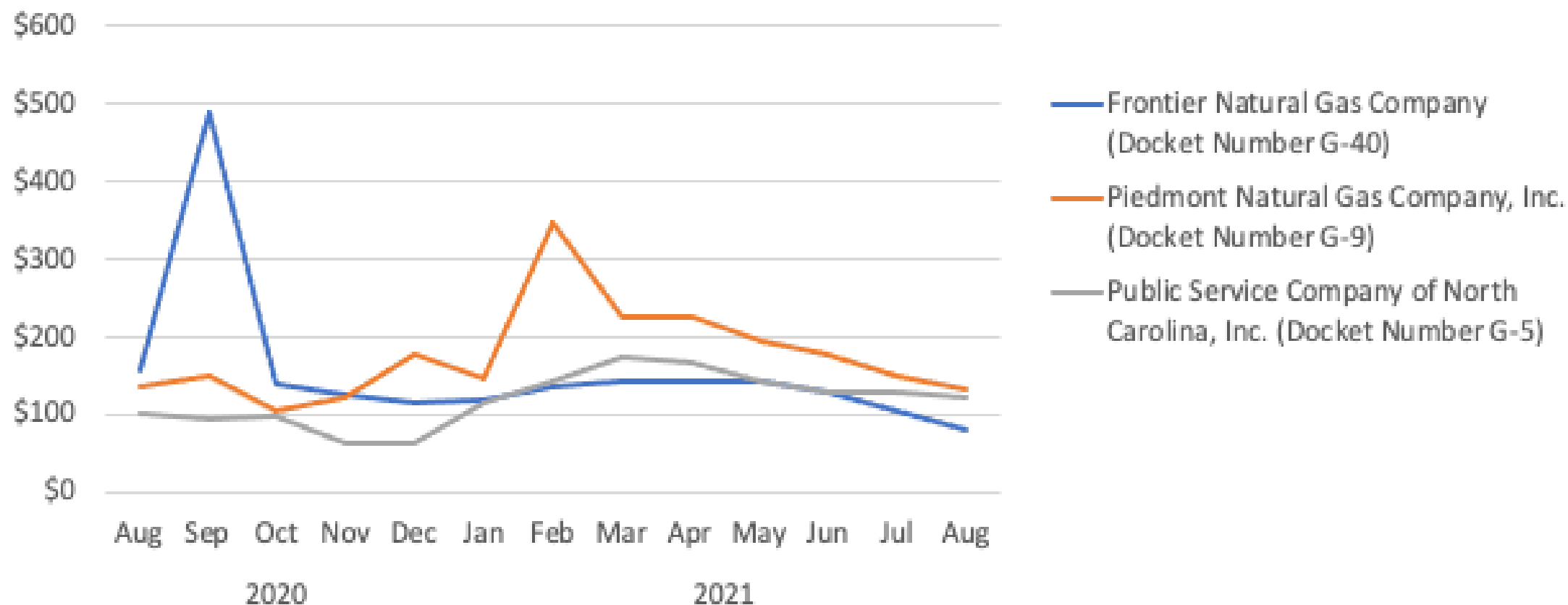
## Average Arrears on Past Due Accounts at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



## Average Arrears on Past Due Accounts at the End of the Month: Residential Accounts Only

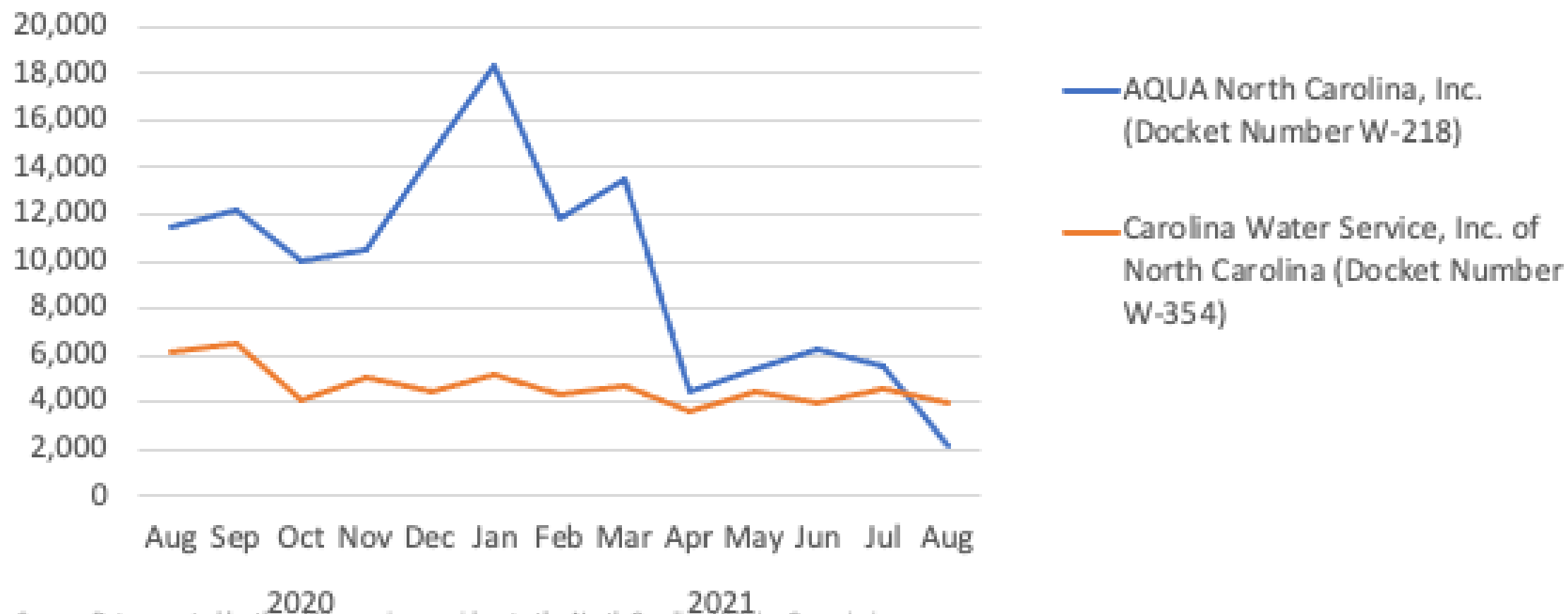


Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

# **WATER & WASTEWATER UTILITY ARREARAGES - LARGEST 2 COMPANIES**

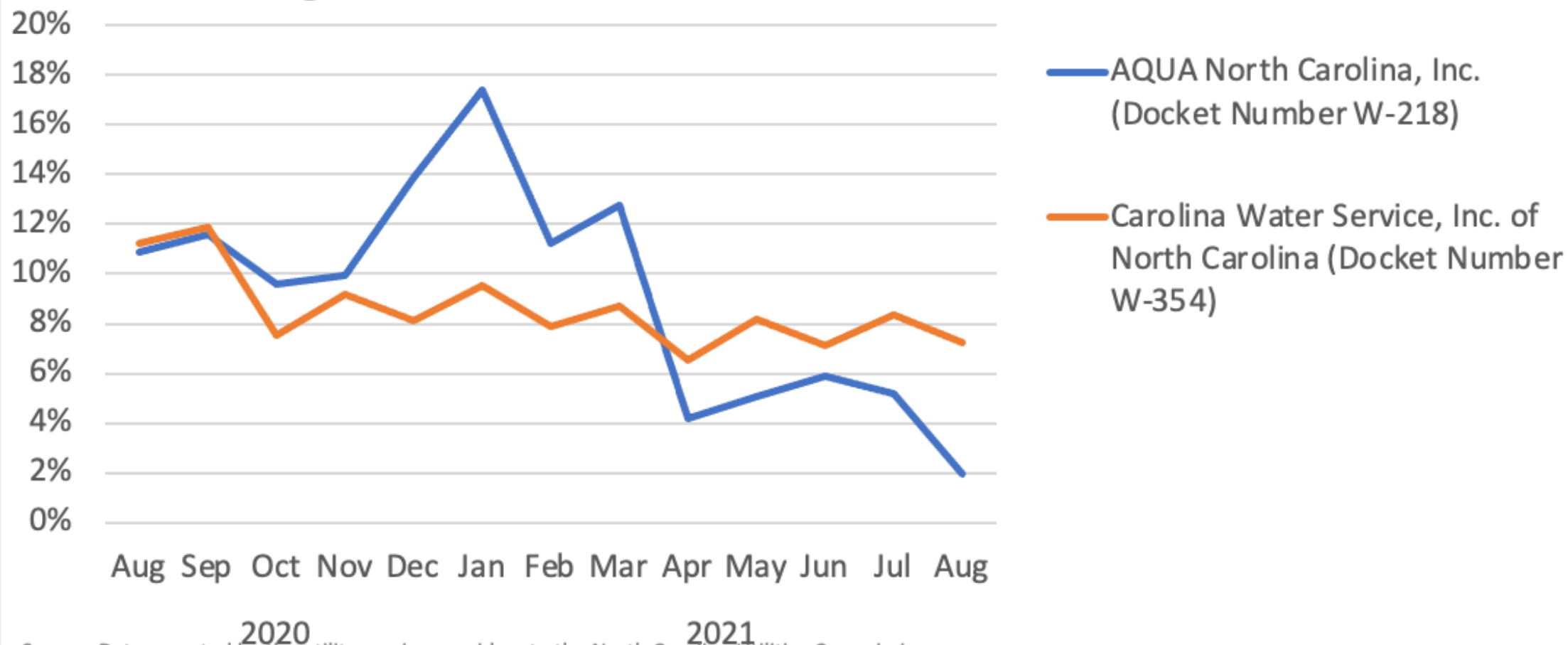


## Number of Accounts Considered Past Due at the End of the Month





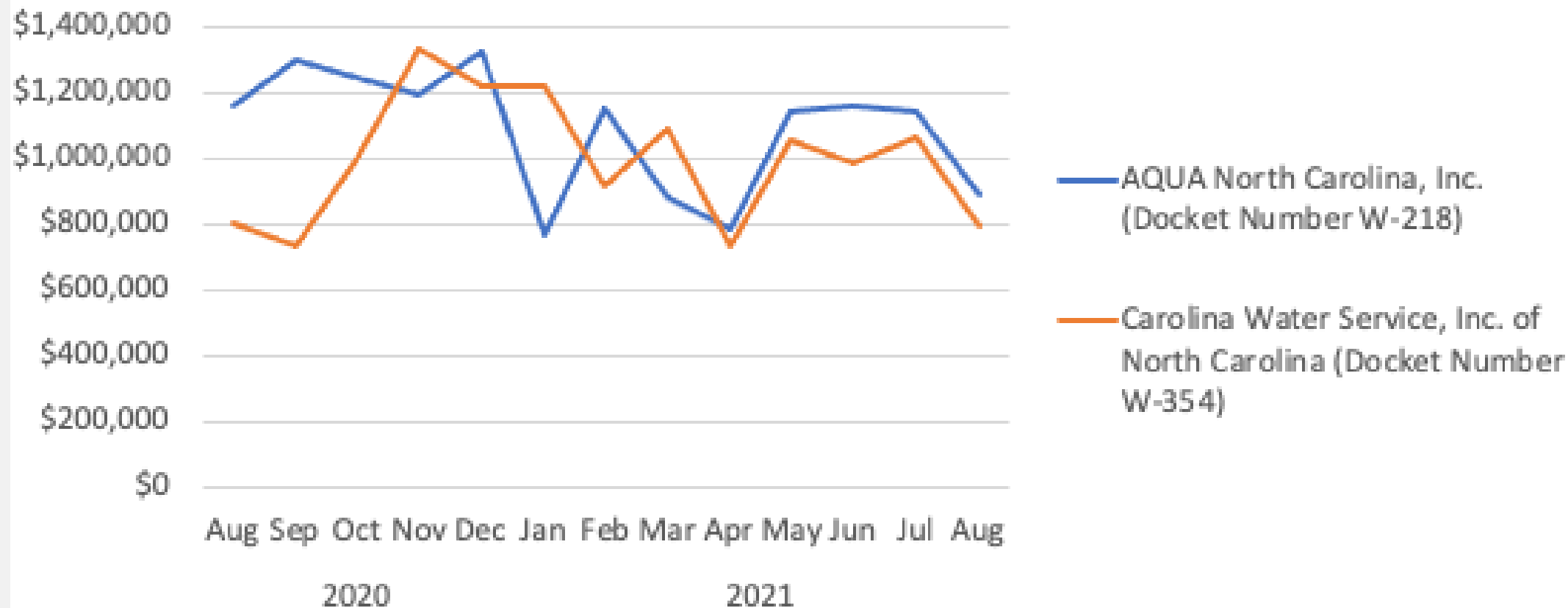
## Percentage of Accounts Considered Past Due at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



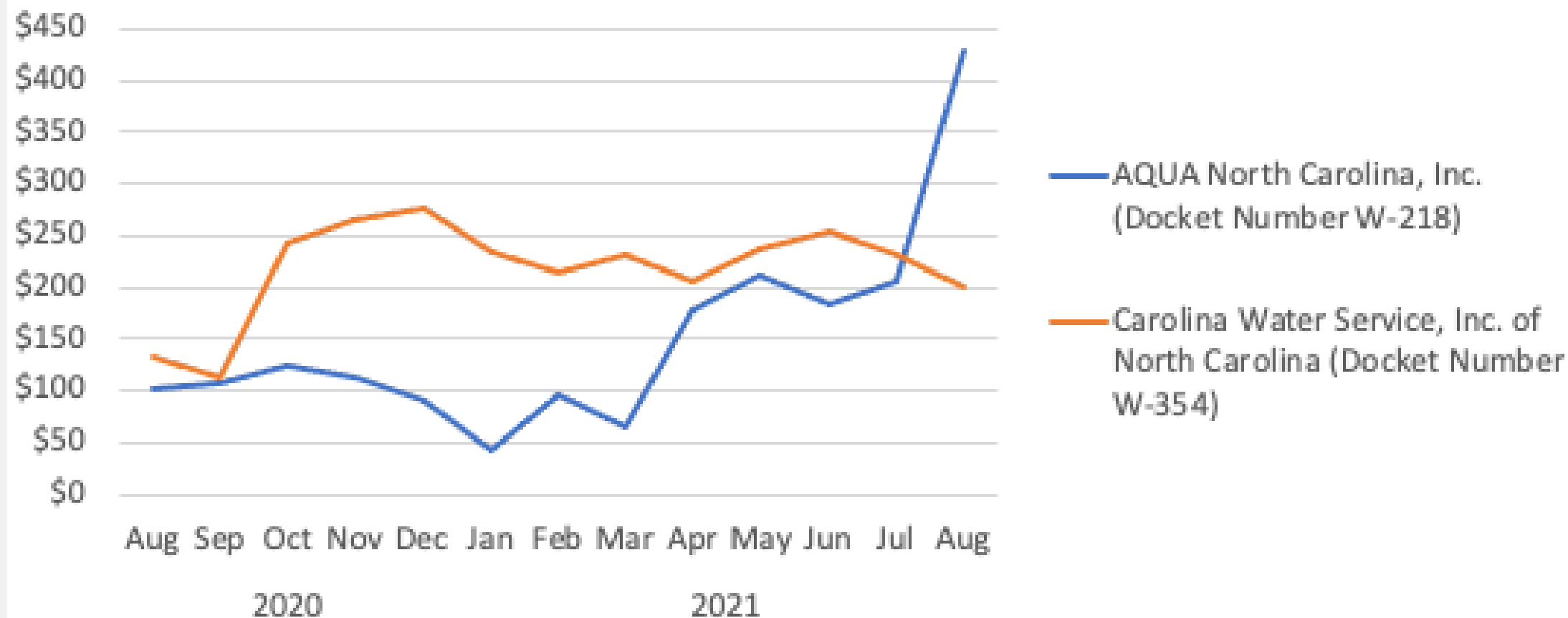
## Total Arrears at Least 30 Days Past Due at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



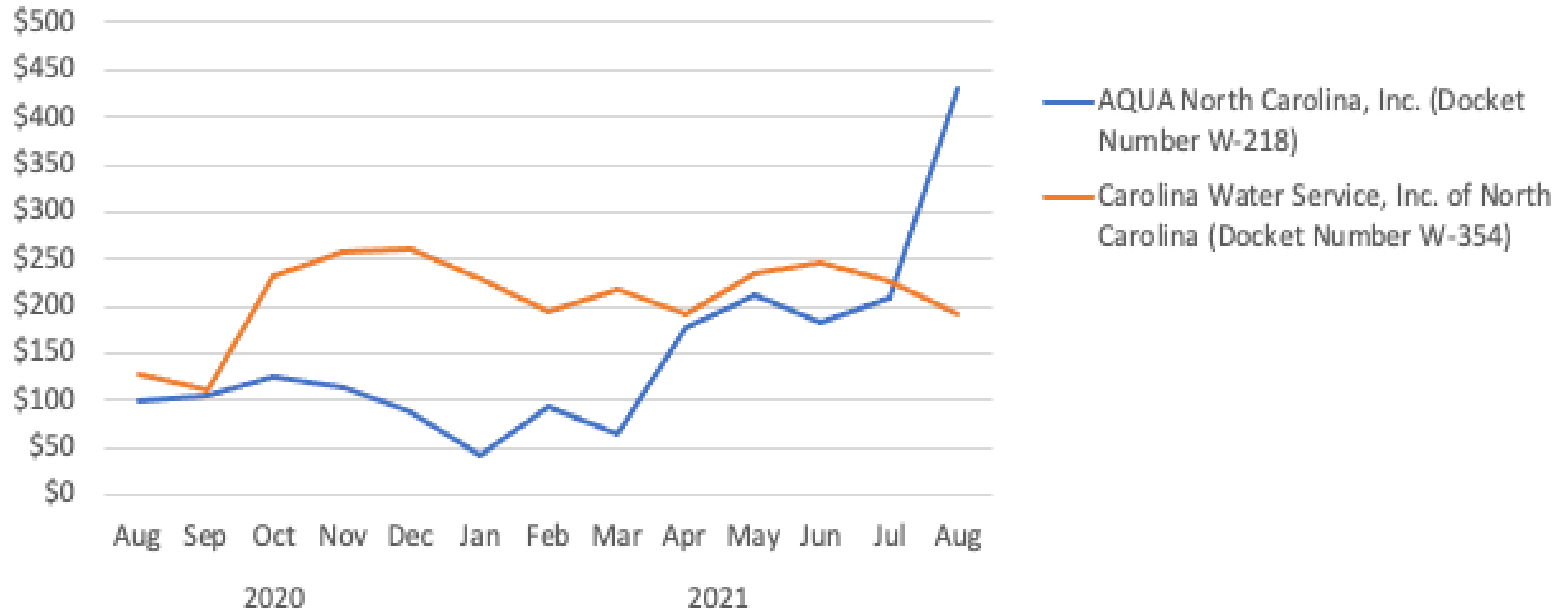
## Average Arrears on Past Due Accounts at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



## Average Arrears on Past Due Accounts at the End of the Month: Residential Accounts Only



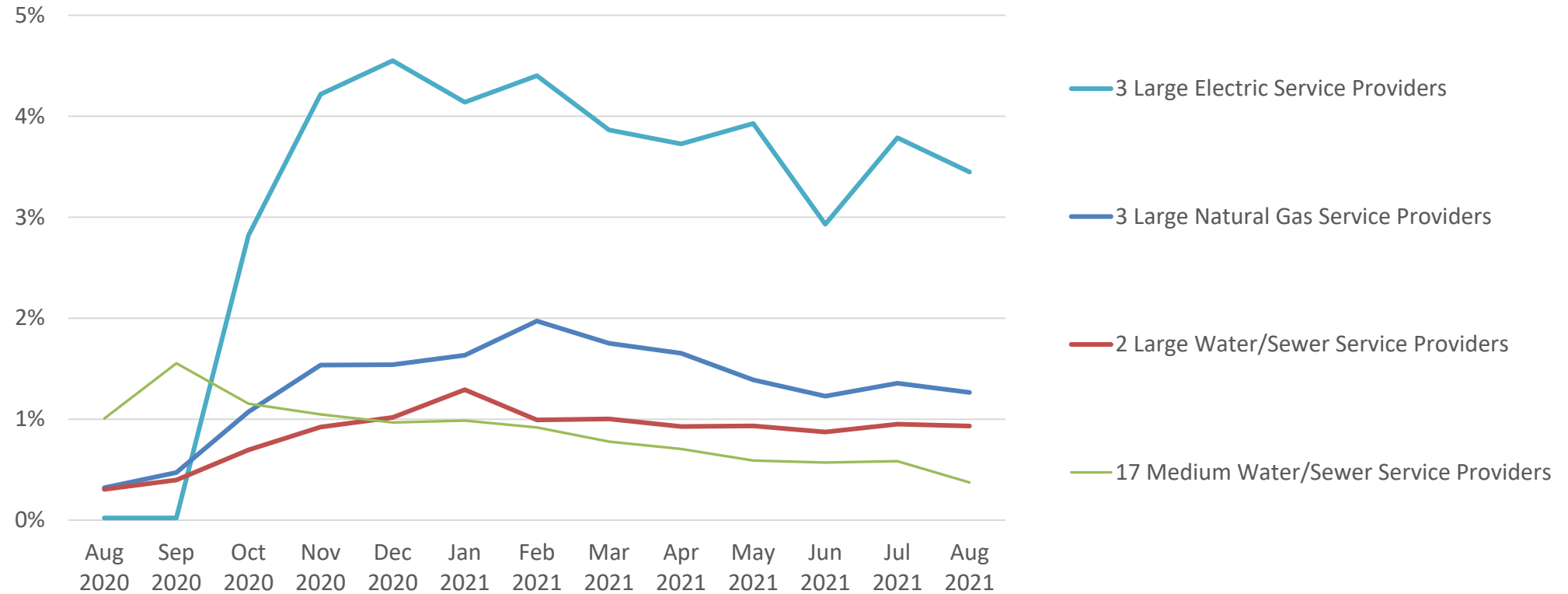
Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.



# PAYMENT PLANS

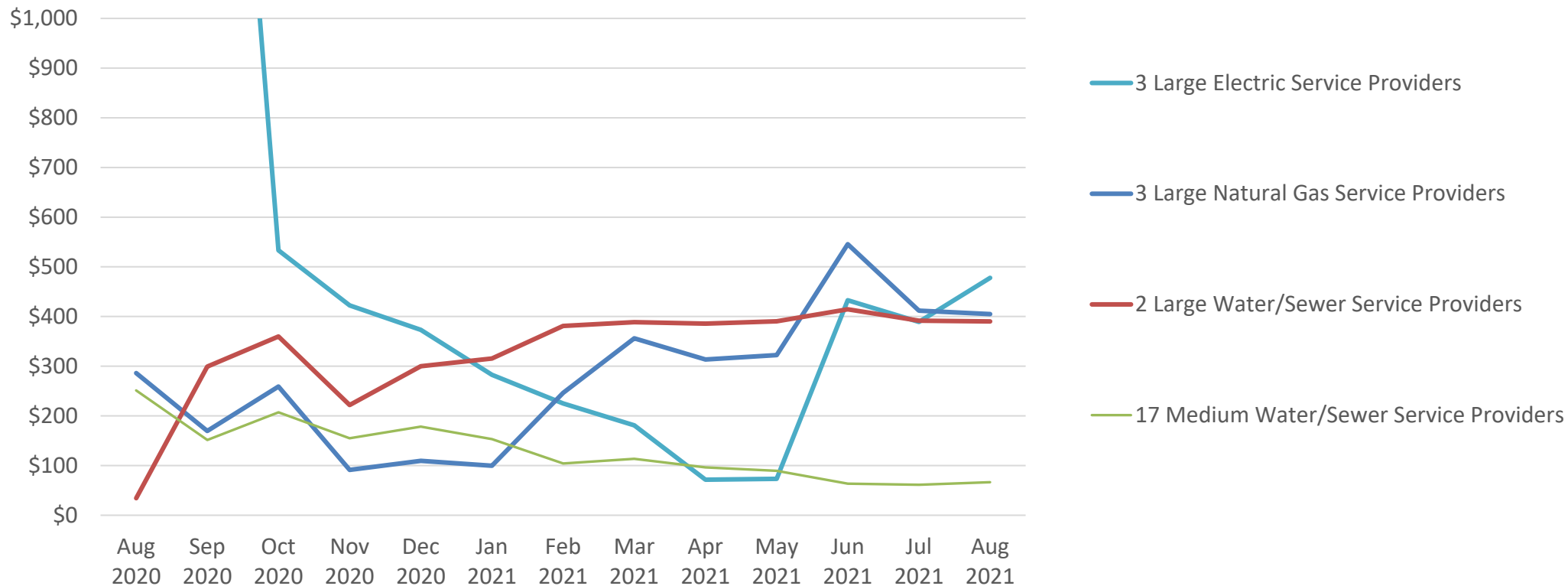


## Percentage of Accounts on Repayment Plans at the End of the Month



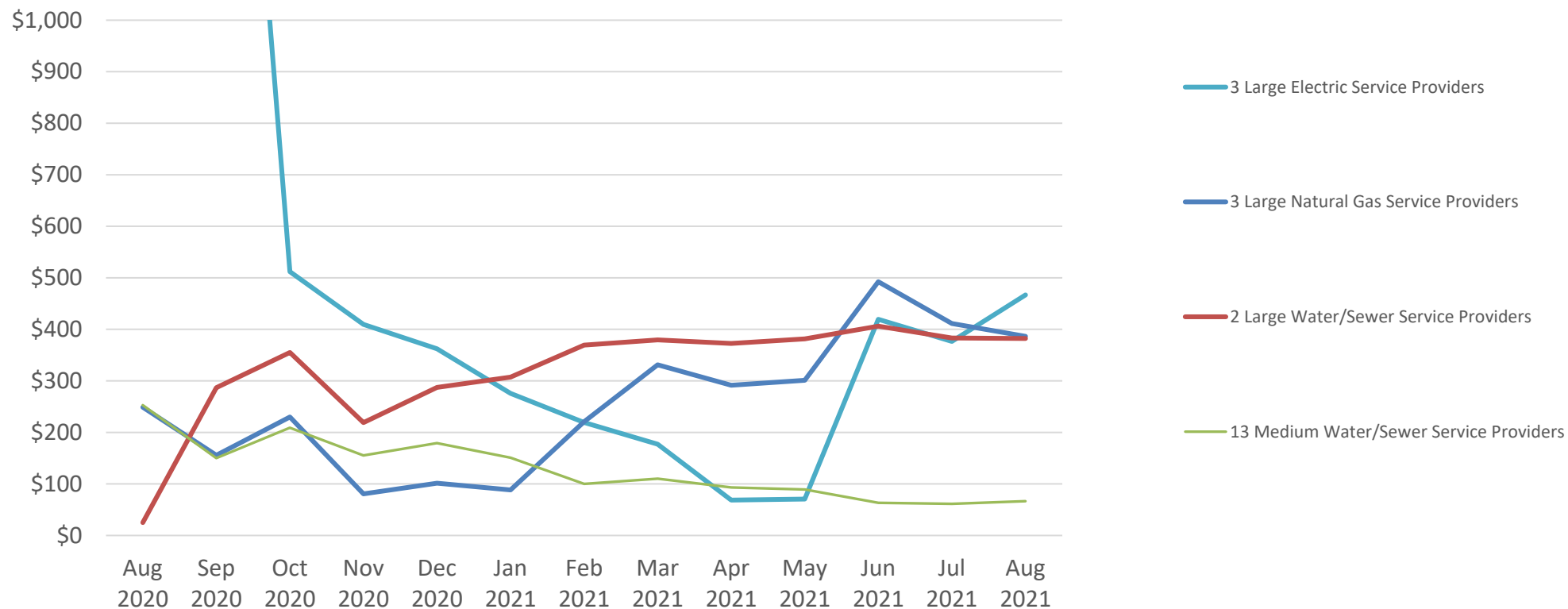
Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. Includes only utilities that reported data every single month since August 2020.

## Average Balance on Repayment Plans at the End of the Month



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. Includes only utilities that reported data every single month since August 2020.

## Average Balance on Repayment Plans at the End of the Month: Residential Accounts Only



Source: Data reported by the utility service providers to the North Carolina Utilities Commission. Includes only utilities that reported data every single month since August 2020.

## Additional Information

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