

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UTILITIES COMMISSION
RALEIGH**

DOCKET NO. E-35, SUB 52

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of		
Application of Western Carolina University)	ORDER GRANTING
for Expedited Approval of Waivers)	ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY
)	WAIVERS OF SPECIFIC
)	SERVICE REGULATIONS

BY THE COMMISSION: On March 19, 2020, the Commission issued an Order Suspending Utility Disconnections for Non-Payment, Allowing Reconnection, and Waiving Certain Fees (Waiver Order) in Docket No. M-100, Sub 158. In summary, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Cooper's Executive Orders 116 and 117, the Waiver Order directed all jurisdictional electric, natural gas, and water and wastewater public utilities to (1) immediately cease customer disconnections for non-payment of bills, (2) waive the application of late fees, (3) suspend individual regulations and tariff provisions that prevent or condition reconnections of disconnected customers, and (4) provide appropriate notice to customers of these changes. The Waiver Order was effective on March 19, 2020.

On March 23, 2020, Western Carolina University (WCU) filed a letter in the above-captioned docket requesting Commission approval to (1) suspend as of March 20, 2020, the disconnection of electric service to WCU's customers who are unable to pay their bills, (2) waive for both residential and non-residential customers the application of late-payment charges and related delinquent-payment finance charges provided for in WCU's Rules and Regulations Governing the Rendition of Electric Service, (3) allow reconnection of residential and non-residential customers without assessment of a reconnection fee, (4) waive for both residential and non-residential customers the application of fees for checks returned due to insufficient funds, and (5) waive for both residential and non-residential customers the transaction fees associated with the payment of electric bills by credit card or debit card.

In support of its request, WCU stated that on March 10, 2020, Governor Cooper issued Executive Order No. 116 declaring a State of Emergency in North Carolina in response to COVID-19. Further, WCU stated that it is taking action to limit the health and financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on its customers, employees, and the general public, and that its proposed actions are consistent with the provision of safe and reliable electric utility service. In addition, WCU stated that it will limit the interaction between customers and its employees during the next two weeks by suspending work that requires an in-home visit by its employees. Moreover, WCU stated that on March 20, 2020, WCU ceased disconnecting electric service to its customers for non-payment of bills.

Finally, WCU requested that the Commission issue an order on an expedited basis approving its requests, with an effective date of March 23, 2020, for those measures in addition to the suspension of service disconnections, and remaining in effect for all measures while the State of Emergency exists in North Carolina, or until otherwise ordered by the Commission.

Based on the foregoing, the Commission finds and concludes that WCU is a jurisdictional utility for purposes of establishing rates and tariffs and that the provisions of the Commission's Waiver Order shall apply to WCU, except as modified in this Order.

With respect to modifications of the Waiver Order, the Commission finds good cause to order that WCU shall: (1) cease disconnections of its customers based on non-payment of electric bills effective March 20, 2020, (2) waive for both residential and non-residential customers late-payment charges, related delinquent-payment finance charges, and reconnection fees, (3) waive for both residential and non-residential customers the fees for checks returned due to insufficient funds, (4) waive for both residential and non-residential customers the transaction fees associated with the payment of electric bills by credit card or debit card, and (5) implement the waivers and modifications enumerated herein in subparagraphs (2) through (4) effective March 23, 2020.

IT IS, THEREFORE, SO ORDERED.

ISSUED BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION.

This the 26th day of March, 2020.

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberley A. Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kimberley A. Campbell, Chief Clerk