

May 8, 2020

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
Room 1236
Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
Room 317
Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 201510

Hon. Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
Room 2468
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
Room 322
Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer:

As a nation, we continue to work through the challenges facing us amid the COVID-19 pandemic and we know many Americans are facing unprecedented healthcare and economic hardships. The natural gas industry feels strongly that access to energy should not be an additional burden for vulnerable customers at this difficult time.

Natural gas utilities are part of the communities they serve and have long supported these communities in a variety of ways. That same spirit of support can be seen now more than ever as these companies work day in and day out to ensure that the healthcare facilities and professionals on the front lines have the energy they need to treat patients, and Americans have the energy they expect as they spend more time in their homes working, teaching, exercising and cooking. Reliable energy is always expected, but it has become clear during this pandemic just how critical it is.

In March, AGA members announced a commitment to work with state public utility commissions to appropriately suspend disconnecting customers from their natural gas service. To that end, AGA member companies are working closely with state public utility commissions and elected officials to help mitigate some of the financial burdens associated with COVID-19 and to preserve customers' access to natural gas through a variety of programs, including fee waivers and payment plans. Additionally, natural gas utilities are helping communities more broadly through support of local food banks and various charities, coordination with non-profit organizations, including the United Way and the Red Cross, and the donation of critical personal protective equipment to first responders. We are committed to making sure customers and communities have the vital energy resources they depend on during this difficult time.

As Congress develops the next COVID-19 package, AGA urges Congress not to enact provisions mandating debt collection requirements and service disconnection moratoriums. These provisions could have the unintended consequences of harming customers and communities at an unprecedented time. These concerns were also expressed by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissions (NARUC), along with public utility commissions from Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and West Virginia, in recent letters to Congress. NARUC and these commissions noted that they have already paused utility collections and disconnections, and further, that the prescriptive language in these Congressional provisions will hamper their efforts to work with their consumers during and after this crisis. Our commitment to safely deliver energy to our customers is at the core of what we do, and we will continue to work with public utility commissions to determine the best approach for ensuring continued delivery of energy while providing relief to customers who are not able to pay their utility bill.

AGA and our members remain committed to serving and supporting our customers and our communities during this crisis. Recognizing the road to recovery may be long, we appreciate your work to ease the pain of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we look forward to working with you in these uncharted waters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. A. Harbert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a stylized "A".

President & CEO
American Gas Association