NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATES

Resolution 2026-03

NASUCA Resolution Urging Disconnection Protections for Temperature and Extreme Weather Events

Whereas, electric, gas, water, and wastewater utility services are vital for the health, safety, comfort, and resilience of all households;[1] and

Whereas, electric and gas utility rates have increased steadily over the last ten years,[2] and costs related to aging infrastructure, grid modernization, hyperscale load development, and wildfires will continue to increase electric and gas bills; and

Whereas, water and wastewater rates across the United States have increased rapidly over the last ten years,[3] and essential investments in aging water and wastewater facilities and acquisitions of municipal and small water systems will continue to increase utility bills; [4] and

Whereas, the disconnection of utility services for non-payment during periods of extreme heat and cold, and during air quality events especially as it relates to wildfire, and before and after wildfire evacuations, jeopardizes the health and safety of customers, household occupants, and communities; and

Whereas, the disconnection of utility services makes a home uninhabitable; and

Whereas, the disconnection of utility services limits access to education and economic opportunities for customers and household occupants; and

Whereas, communities across the United States are experiencing an increase in record-breaking heat waves causing prolonged heat and drought, extreme wildfire events including an increase in urban conflagrations and associated air quality events, extreme cold including ice storms, and other severe weather events;[5] and

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[1] *Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division v. Craft*, 436 U.S. 1 (1978) ("Utility service is a necessity of modern life; indeed, the discontinuance of water or heating for even short periods of time may threaten health and safety.").

[2] *See U.S. Price of Natural Gas Delivered to Residential Customers*, U.S. ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION (last visited Nov. 6, 2026), https://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/hist/n3010us3a.htm; *see also Average Price of Electricity to Ultimate Consumers*, U.S. ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION (last visited Nov. 6, 2026), https://www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm_table_grapher.php?t=table_5_03.

[3] *Water and Sewer Price and Affordability Trends in the United States, 2017–2023*, AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION (Aug. 15, 2024), https://awwa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/awwa.2315; *see also* https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-is-paying-to-fix-outdated-water-and-sewer-systems-you-are-1521106201; *see also* Heather Collins, *The Other Affordability Crisis: Water*, THE HILL (Jul. 2, 2026, 10:30 AM), https://thehill.com/opinion/finance/5949625-escalating-water-costs-us/; *see also Report: Median U.S. household water and sewer bills reach $1,065 annually*, WATERWORLD (Jul. 29, 2026), https://www.waterworld.com/water-utility-management/news/55394344/report-median-us-household-water-and-sewer-bills-reach-1065-annually.

[4] *See NASUCA Resolution 2026-01 Encouraging Permanent Federal Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program*, NASUCA (Jul. 19, 2026), https://www.nasuca.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2026-01-NASUCA-LIHWAP-Resolution.pdf.

[5] *See EPA Releases Updated Climate Indicators Report Showing How Climate Change is Impacting People's Health and the Environment*, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (Jul. 1, 2024), https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-releases-updated-climate-indicators-report-showing-how-climate-change-impacting.

Whereas, the frequency, duration, and intensity of extreme heat waves have significantly increased over the past several decades;[6] and

Whereas, extreme heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths;[7] and

Electric and Gas Service

Whereas, the three largest categories of residential electrical consumption are the heating and cooling of the home and heating water,[8] with these services being essential to maintaining health, safety, comfort, and access to other essential goods and services, and resilience; and

Whereas, the loss of utility services can cause households to resort to using unsafe sources of heating in their homes;[9] and

Whereas, the loss of utility services renders households without the ability to utilize air purifying devices and can force households to open windows in the absence of cooling during poor air quality events; and

Whereas, in areas where utility services are needed to provide heat, households with older adults, certain medical conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, pregnant people, or young children, are particularly at risk if utility services are disconnected, due to a higher risk of hypothermia;[10,11] and

Whereas, in areas where utility service is necessary to assist with cooling, households with older adults, certain medical conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, pregnant

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[6] *See id.*

[7] *See Extreme heat kills more people than any other extreme weather event,* American Public Health Association (Nov. 5, 2025), https://www.apha.org/publications/public-health-newswire/public-health-newswire/articles/extreme-heat-kills-more-people-than-any-other-extreme-weather-event; *see also Climate Change Indicators: Heat-Related Deaths*, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (last visited Nov. 6, 2026), https://19january2021snapshot.epa.gov/climate-indicators/climate-change-indicators-heat-related-deaths_.html; *see also* Karen Lusson, *Update: Protecting Access To Essential Utility Service During Extreme Heat And Climate Change*, NATIONAL CONSUMER LAW CENTER (July 2026), https://www.nclc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2026.07_Report_Update-to-Protecting-Access-to-Essential-Utility-Service-During-Extreme-Heat-and-Climate-Change.pdf; *see also Department of Homeland Security Offers Community Leaders New Resources to Prepare for Extreme Temperature Events as 17 States Experience Record-Breaking Heat*, FEMA (Aug. 25, 2023), https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20250602/department-homeland-security-offers-community-leaders-new-resources-prepare#:~:text=Heat%20remains%20the%20no.,effects%20threaten%20our%20critical%20infrastructur.

[8] *Use of energy explained, Energy Use in Homes*, U.S. ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION (Dec. 18, 2023), https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/use-of-energy/electricity-use-in-homes.php.

[9] *See, e.g.*, Deneen L. Brown, et al., *Carbon Monoxide Blamed after Father and His 7 Children Die in Their Sleep*, WASHINGTON POST (Apr. 7, 2015), https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/grandparents-father-of-7-who-died-in-princess-anne-home-was-doing-his-best/2015/04/07/fa8debc2-dd14-11e4-be40-566e2653afe5_story.html; *Power Shut Off; Candle Triggers Blaze; 10* Killed, THE EVENING NEWS, BEACON, NEW YORK (May 15, 1982), https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1982&dat=19820515&id=AYRGAAAAIBAJ&sjid=mTINAAAAIBAJ&pg=1950,1867982&hl=en; *Utility Says It Followed Rules in Shutting Off Service*, THE OAKLAND PRESS (May 1, 2015, 5:13 PM), http://www.dailytribune.com/general-news/20150501/utility-says-it-followed-rules-in-shutting-off-service.

[10] *Cold Weather Safety for Older Adults*, NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING (Jan. 3, 2024), https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/cold-weather-safety-older-adults.

[11] *Hypothermia*, STANFORD MEDICINE, CHILDREN'S HEALTH (last visited Nov. 6, 2026), https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=hypothermia-85-P00844.

people, or young children are particularly at risk if utility services are disconnected due to the higher risk of heat stress;[12,13] and

Water and Wastewater

Whereas, water is a basic biological necessity, and clean, reliable, and affordable drinking water and wastewater sanitation is essential for the health, safety, welfare, and economic development of all people; and

Whereas, shutting off water and wastewater services for even a short period results in unsafe and unsanitary conditions and can pose a threat to human health and welfare because the lack of adequate sanitation can allow people to become sick and cause disease to spread;[14] and

Whereas, high heat and humidity increase the need for drinking water to regulate body temperature, prevent dehydration and heat stroke, and maintain cognitive function;[15] and

Whereas, the lack of water under extreme heat conditions is life threatening;[16] and

Vulnerable Consumers

Whereas, older adults, young children, pregnant people, medically vulnerable people, people with disabilities, and homebound persons are particularly sensitive to or at risk from extreme temperatures and compromised air quality; and

Whereas, older adults on fixed incomes, homebound persons, and people with disabilities, in particular, may face challenges in not only affording utility bills but also in accessing available assistance for paying utility bills, due to mobility limitations or other age-related vulnerabilities;[17] and

Whereas, loss of utility service can lead to risk of serious harm or death for medically-vulnerable customers or household occupants who lose access to critical, life-saving, or life-preserving medical equipment; or have serious or chronic medical conditions that may be exacerbated by loss of electric, gas, water, or wastewater service, particularly during periods of extreme temperature; and

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[12] *Heat and Older Adults (Age 65+)*, U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL, HEAT HEALTH (June 25, 2024), https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/risk-factors/heat-and-older-adults-aged-65.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fextreme-heat%2Frisk-factors%2Fextreme-heat-and-older-adults-aged-65.html.

[13] *Extreme Heat – Children's unique vulnerability*, UNICEF CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATIVE (last visited Nov. 6, 2026), https://ceh.unicef.org/spotlight-risk/extreme-heat.

[14] Zhang, et al., *Water Shutoff Moratoria Lowered Covid-19 Infection and Death Across U.S. States*, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE, NATIONAL CENTER FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION (Feb. 2022), https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8433038/.

[15] *The importance of staying hydrated in the summer heat*, INDIANA UNIVERSITY HEALTH (Jul. 10, 2024), https://iuhealth.org/thrive/the-importance-of-staying-hydrated-in-the-summer-heat-isr.

[16] *Dehydration and Heat Stroke*, JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE (last visited Nov. 6, 2026), https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/dehydration-and-heat-stroke.

[17] Mihret Walelgne Menberu, *The Mobility Crisis in Aging America: How Geography and Disability Shape Access to Transportation*, WEST HEALTH MOSAIC (Dec. 18, 2025), https://westhealthmosaic.com/articles/the-mobility-crisis-in-aging-america-how-geography-and-disability-shape-access-to-transportation; *see also At Risk: People with Disabilities*, HEAT.GOV (last visited Nov. 6, 2026), https://heat.gov/who-is-most-at-risk-to-extreme-heat/at-risk-people-with-disabilities/; *see also Energy Bills Challenge America's Fixed-Income Seniors*, 60 PLUS (last visited Nov. 6, 2026), https://60plus.org/epanationalstudy/.

Whereas, utility disconnections have a disparate impact on those with disabilities, medical issues, and limited income communities;[18] and

Whereas, low-income households are particularly threatened by utility shutoffs that may lead to unsafe living conditions that, in turn, that may lead to housing insecurity, removal of minor children,[19] and evictions;[20] and

Whereas, low-income households are often disproportionately affected by heat and cold due to poor housing conditions and lack of access to cooling mechanisms during the summer;[21] and

Whereas, urban areas become heat islands that are hotter than outlying areas due to the absorption of heat by buildings and infrastructure and where heat may linger longer than outlying areas due to the slow release of heat from these surfaces;[22] and

Whereas, heat islands increase heat-related risks for households in urban areas and disproportionately impact low-income households;[23] and

Whereas, low-income households often go without food or forego medical or dental care in order to pay utility bills, or suffer illness to lower those bills, by setting thermostats to unhealthy levels for the outside temperature;[24] and

Whereas, vulnerable residents and occupants of master-metered buildings may not receive prior notice of service terminations because they are not the customers of the utility[25] and may not be eligible for bill discount programs or other energy assistance; and

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[18] Parinandi, et. al., *Lights Out: Political and Economic Determinants of Electricity Shutoffs in the United States*, THE JOURNAL OF FEDERALISM (July 2025), https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580d79b659cc689a7b41eea6/t/688a77aac97048437234192e/1753905066805/Parinandi-Sevin-Provins+Publius+Article.pdf; *see also* Hernandez, et. al., *Surviving a Shut-Off: US Households at Greatest Risk of Utility Disconnections and How They Cope,* (June 202), https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jennifer-Laird-8/publication/351440651_Surviving_a_Shut-Off_US_Households_at_Greatest_Risk_of_Utility_Disconnections_and_How_They_Cope/links/6132652ec69a4e487979cbc3/Surviving-a-Shut-Off-US-Households-at-Greatest-Risk-of-Utility-Disconnections-and-How-They-Cope.pdf or https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00027642211013401?journalCode=absb.

[19] *If I Wasn't Poor, I Wouldn't Be Unfit': The Family Separation Crisis in the US Child Welfare System*, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (Nov. 17, 2022), https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/11/17/if-i-wasnt-poor-i-wouldnt-be-unfit/family-separation-crisis-us-child-welfare.

[20] Fran Smith, *The Health Divide: Utilities are turning off the water to struggling homes, but the issue gets little attention*, USC ANNENBERG CENTER FOR HEALTH JOURNALISM (Aug. 3, 2026), https://centerforhealthjournalism.org/our-work/insights/health-divide-utilities-are-turning-water-struggling-homes-issue-gets-little; *see also* Zhang, et al., *Water Shutoff Moratoria Lowered Covid-19 Infection and Death Across U.S. States*, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE, NATIONAL CENTER FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION (Feb. 2022), https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8433038/.

[21] *Heat and Health,* WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (July 31, 2026), https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-heat-and-health.

[22] *Learn About Heat Island Effects U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (last visited Nov. 9, 2026), https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/learn-about-heat-island-effects.

[23] Hsu, A., Sheriff, G., Chakraborty, T. et al. *Disproportionate exposure to urban heat island intensity across major US cities.* NATURE COMMUNICATIONS (May 25, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-22799-5.

[24] *Update: Protecting Access to Essential Utility Service During Extreme Heat and Climate Change*, NATIONAL CONSUMER LAW CENTER (July 2026), https://www.nclc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2026.07_Report_Update-to-Protecting-Access-to-Essential-Utility-Service-During-Extreme-Heat-and-Climate-Change.pdf; *see also* Nock, D., Maillacheruvu, S.U. & Harper, *Mapping the Gap: A Review of Residential Energy and Transportation Deficit Metrics,* SPRINGER NATURE (Feb. 4, 2025), https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40518-024-00250-9; *see also Cuts to federal home energy assistance leave millions at risk*, INITIATIVE FOR ENERGY JUSTICE (Apr. 24, 2025), https://iejusa.org/cuts-to-federal-home-energy-assistance-leave-millions-at-risk/.

[25] *Utility Billing in Rental Housing: Tenant Rights and RUBS Explained*, NATIONAL TENANT SERVICES (last visited Nov. 9, 2026), https://nationaltenantservicesauthority.com/utility-billing-tenant-rights/; *see also An Introduction to Ratio Utility Billing Systems for Tenant Advocates*, NATIONAL CONSUMER LAW Center (Feb. 15, 2026), https://library.nclc.org/article/introduction-ratio-utility-billing-systems-tenant-advocates.

Whereas, states vary in the protections against disconnections available to customers and household occupants during extreme temperature and weather, and many states offer no protections against water and wastewater shutoffs;[26] and

Whereas, current protections for households against shut offs during the summer months may be insufficient due to both the process utility companies use to determine shut off dates and by the sole use of temperature, without accounting for humidity or air quality, as the determining factor for service termination restrictions.[27]

Now, therefore be it resolved, that NASUCA urges states and Commissions to establish or enhance existing policies to suspend the shutoff of electricity, gas, water, and wastewater service when weather and conditions may result in significant harm to the health, safety, and resilience of customers and household occupants such as, but not limited to,

- suspending the disconnection of utility service during specified calendar dates corresponding to periods of known cold or hot temperatures or high heat index; and/or
- suspending the disconnection of electric, gas, water, and wastewater service to homes on the day of and day after the forecasted temperature is at or below a specified cold threshold or the forecasted heat index is at or above a specified heat index threshold; and
- suspending the disconnection of utility service during periods of poor air quality based on the Air Quality Index (AQI); and
- protecting households immediately by extending these emergency disconnection suspensions to customers and households without additional procedural barriers such as requiring the enrollment into specific programs; and
- automatically reconnecting previously disconnected customers during one of the aforementioned suspension periods; and
- waiving security deposits for new applicants and accounts who have been disconnected and would normally need to pay another security deposit to be reconnected.

Be it further resolved, that NASUCA encourages states that are examining whether and/or how to implement calendar-based and/or temperature- or weather-related disconnection protections to evaluate and consider the following items in a transparent proceeding or legislative session:

- state-specific temperature conditions and/or date ranges that create risks to customers if they are disconnected from service;
- state-specific AQI thresholds that create risks to customers if they are disconnected from service;
- whether to incorporate Heat Advisory warnings from the National Weather Service in addition to temperature- and/or calendar-based disconnection prohibitions, to capture the impacts of humidity[28] on the human body in addition to temperature;
- waiving late fees and reconnection fees while protections are in effect;

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[26] *See Utility Disconnections Dashboard,* Indiana University Energy Justice Lab, (last visited Nov. 9, 2026), https://utilitydisconnections.org/.
[27] *Petition of the Office of People's Counsel Requesting an Emergency Order to Protect Utility Customers from extreme heat*, MARYLAND OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL (Jun. 18, 2024), https://opc.maryland.gov/Portals/0/Files/Publications/Others/OPC%20Petition%20for%20Emergency%20Relief%2006182024%20-%20Copy.pdf?ver=K2FLrBCfYlsl8hgghr1X7Q%3d%3d
[28] *See Update: Protecting Access to Essential Utility Service During Extreme Heat and Climate Change*, NATIONAL CONSUMER LAW CENTER (July 2026), https://www.nclc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2026.07_Report_Update-to-Protecting-Access-to-Essential-Utility-Service-During-Extreme-Heat-and-Climate-Change.pdf; *see also State Laws to Prevent Utility Shutoffs During Extreme Heat*, (Jul. 22, 2026), https://www.networkforphl.org/resources/state-laws-to-prevent-utility-shutoffs-during-extreme-heat/.

- establishing and enrolling customers in flexible relief or arrearage management programs that either relieves a specific amount of debt or spreads debt accrued before and during the protection period over multiple billing cycles and forgives the remaining balance after a history of on-time payments, to prevent disconnection recidivism once protections expire.

Be it further resolved, that NASUCA encourages states to permit customers who have already been disconnected to be reconnected without deposit or up-front payment when extreme weather events occur, regardless of past due amounts owed.

Be it further resolved, that NASUCA reaffirms its Resolution 2018-03 "Urging Adoption of Protections Against Termination of Utility Service for Low-income, Senior, and other At-Risk Households in which a Seriously or Chronically Ill or Disabled Person Resides,"[29] and nothing in this resolution is intended to undermine or contradict that resolution.

Be it further resolved, that NASUCA authorizes its Executive Committee to develop specific positions and take appropriate actions, consistent with the terms of this resolution and the needs of its Members and their utility consumers. The Executive Committee shall notify the membership of any action pursuant to this resolution.

Submitted by the NASUCA CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Approved by the Membership
November 15, 2026
New Orleans, Louisiana

[29] *NASUCA Resolution 2018-03 Urging Adoption of Protections Against Termination of Utility Service for Low-Income, Senior, and Other At-Risk Households in which a Seriously or Chronically Ill or Disabled Person Resides*, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UTILITY CONSUMER ADVOCATES, (Jun. 24, 2018), https://nasuca.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2018-03-Protections-from-Shutoff-for-Customers-with-Serious-Illnesses-Final-6-24-18-002.pdf.