

## PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION ORDER TO STOP HARDSHIP DISCONNECTS IS **NOT** AN INVITATION FOR CONSUMERS TO STOP PAYING UTILITY BILLS, ADVISES PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

Louisiana Public Service Commissioner Eric Skrmetta clarified that the LPSC Executive Order to stop utility disconnects is designed as a temporary relief during this viral crisis to assist those customers who do not have the means to remain current with their utility payments.

Said Skrmetta, **“Our message to ratepayers is to pay your utility bill on time if you have the ability to do so.**” But for those who can’t pay timely due to this crisis, we have instructed utility companies to stop disconnects at this time. When our order is lifted, all utility payments will have to be paid in full including those that were temporarily not collected. The order is not a grant, credit or loan. This is relief for hardships cases. **Unpaid balances will not be forgiven.** If a ratepayer has the financial ability to remain current with monthly payments, then that ratepayer should do so.”

The LPSC issued the Executive Order late last week to halt all utility customer disconnects due to non-payment of bills. The Order is for an undetermined period pending the development of the pandemic crisis.