

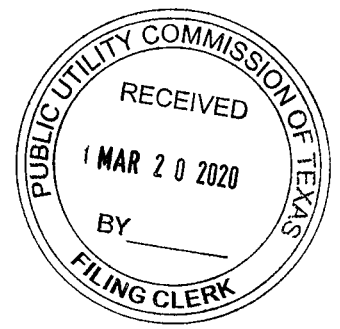


Control Number: 50664



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March 20, 2020

Chairman DeAnn T. Walker
Commissioner Arthur C. D’Andrea
Commissioner Shelly Botkin
Public Utility Commission of Texas
1701 N. Congress Ave.
Austin, TX 78701

Re: Project No. 50664, *Issues Related to the State of Disaster for the Coronavirus Disease 2019*

Dear Commissioners:

In response to the Memorandum filed on March 16, 2020 in this matter by Ms. Connie Corona, PUC Chief Program Officer, I would like to share a few initial steps Aqua Texas (“Aqua”) is taking to provide its water and sewer customers relief as they deal with the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) crisis. I shared some of these measures with PUC Executive Director, John Paul Urban, last week.

Aqua is actively monitoring and evaluating the latest news and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and knows Aqua customers are, too. We understand some customers might be concerned about the safety of their drinking water during this time of uncertainty, and we have issued a press release assuring our customers that our standard treatment processes remove or inactivate viruses, including COVID-19, from our water supplies and sources. We’ve also publicized this message on our social media sites. Further, Aqua and its affiliates are working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local health authorities, and if additional treatment steps are recommended, Aqua will evaluate such recommendations and act accordingly. Please see the attached release.

We know some of our customers will experience financial impacts from the COVID-19 situation. Until further notice, Aqua has voluntarily decided to suspend all disconnects for non-payment of bills. Aqua intends to consider other ways it can help its water utility customers and their communities in the coming days and weeks. But we hope these measures will provide some measure of immediate relief to customers who need it.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (512) 990-4400 or at the e-mail address below if you have any questions regarding these efforts. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Laughman
President
Aqua Texas, Inc.
RLLaughman@aquaamerica.com

cc: John Paul Urban, PUC Executive Director
Connie Corona, PUC Chief Program Officer

Enclosure

For release: March 17, 2020

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Essential's utilities prepared for COVID-19

BRYN MAWR, Pa. – Essential Utilities Inc. announced today that its Aqua water utilities and Peoples natural gas utilities continue to monitor the novel coronavirus "COVID-19" outbreak throughout its combined ten-state footprint, working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local health authorities to continuously address the situation and evaluate operational response plans.

"As water, wastewater and natural gas utilities, we are a critical part of everyday life," said Essential Chairman and CEO Christopher Franklin. "The health and safety of our customers and employees is our top priority."

Each Aqua utility is focused on providing critical public services to ensure the continued reliability and safety of water and wastewater systems for customers.

"First and foremost, our customers should be assured that drinking water provided by each Aqua water utility meets or exceeds all state and federal water quality standards," said Colleen Arnold, president overseeing Aqua's eight-state water and wastewater businesses. "Our standard business operations include treatment procedures that remove or inactivate viruses, including COVID-19, from our water supplies and sources."

Aqua customers can stay up to date on any water service emergencies impacting their area by signing up to receive WaterSmart Alerts by phone, email and/or text. To sign up, please visit www.aquaamerica.com and see the Water Smart Alerts link in the sidebar.

"At Peoples, we are fully prepared to continue to provide safe and reliable natural gas service," said Joe Gregorini, president of Peoples. "We have strong and exercised business continuity plans to ensure our customers receive high quality service even while we are dealing with situations such as the coronavirus pandemic."

Peoples customers can learn more by visiting www.peoples-gas.com.

Beginning in late February, Essential activated its business continuity planning procedure and its preparedness efforts include providing ongoing guidance and resources to employees to mitigate the spread of acute respiratory illness, lessen the potential impact of COVID-19 in operating facilities and maintain business operations. No disruptions or impact to water, wastewater or natural gas services are anticipated as a result of the outbreak.

For more information about the coronavirus, please visit:

- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention**
- **World Health Organization**

About Essential

Essential is one of the largest publicly traded water, wastewater and natural gas providers in the U.S., serving approximately 5 million people across 10 states under the Aqua and Peoples brands. Essential is committed to excellence in proactive infrastructure investment, regulatory expertise, operational efficiency and environmental stewardship. The company recognizes the importance water and natural gas play in everyday life and is proud to deliver safe, reliable services that contribute to the quality of life in the communities it serves. For more information, visit <http://www.essential.co>.

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