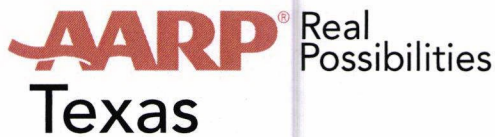


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March 24, 2020

Chairman DeAnn T. Walker  
Commissioner Arthur D'Andrea  
Commissioner Shelly Botkin  
Public Utility Commission of Texas  
1701 North Congress Avenue  
Austin, TX 78711



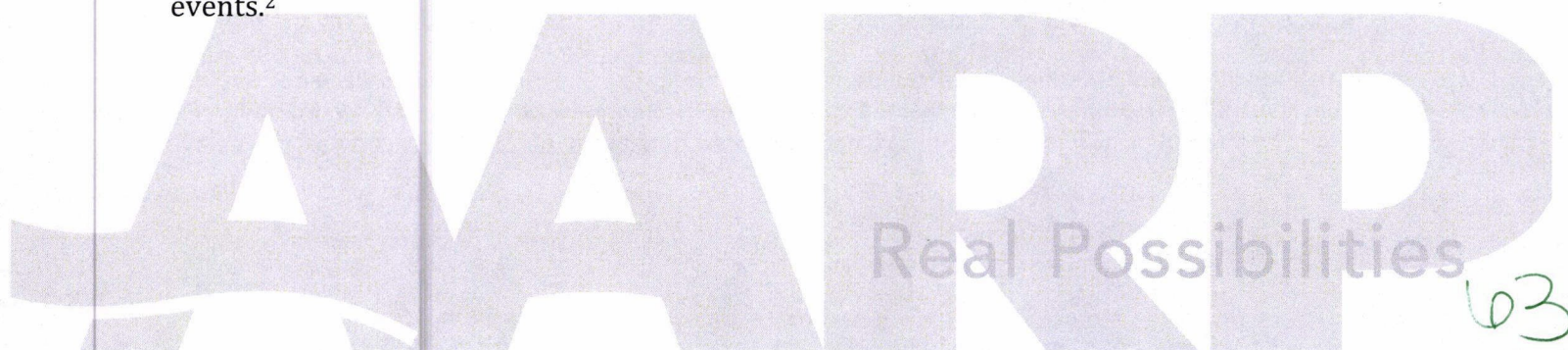
Re: *Project No. 50664, Petition of Texas Legal Services Center, Disability Rights Texas, Legal Aid of Northwest Texas, Lone Star Legal Aid, People's Community Clinic, Texas Health Action and Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid for Adoption of Emergency Customer Protection Rules For Temporary Support To Victims of COVID-19*

Dear Chair Walker and Commissioners:

On behalf of our 2.3 million AARP members in Texas, I am writing to express our support for the "Petition for Emergency Customer Protections Rules" in Docket No. 50664, as filed by Texas Legal Services Center, et al. on March 20, 2020.

As you know, hour by hour, the health and economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis is growing. With an increasing number of Texans under shelter in place requirements and the arrival of warmer temperatures, utility usage and bills are likely to increase in the coming weeks. Increasing utility demand coupled with the reality that many Texans may be newly out-of-work is creating a dangerous situation for residents of our state. Older Texans are particularly vulnerable to increased utility costs due to fixed incomes and yet must stay home to protect themselves from contracting COVID-19.

The proposal in the petition would prevent electric, water, and phone providers from charging down payments, fees, late charges, or effectuating terminations until 30 days after the state of emergency has been terminated.<sup>1</sup> These protections are important and are in line with previous Public Utility Commission action in the wake of extreme weather events.<sup>2</sup>



Without utility service, some Texans face the very real prospect of injury or death. We believe the protections before you will go a long way in preventing such tragedies. Please consider adopting this rule as soon as possible. The welfare of some of our most vulnerable residents may hang in the balance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina Tran", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tina Tran  
State Director

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<sup>1</sup> Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak (Mar. 13, 2020), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-declaring-nationalemergency-concerning-novel-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak/>. And Governor Abbott Declares State of Disaster in Texas due to COVID-19 (Mar. 13, 2020), <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-declares-state-of-disaster-in-texas-due-to-covid-19>

<sup>2</sup> PUC Petition of the Office of Public Utility Counsel of Texas to Adopt an Emergency Rule To Suspend Disconnection of Electric Utility Services Due to Extreme and Persistent Heat Conditions and Record High Electricity Prices. (July 21, 2006) [http://interchange.puc.texas.gov/Documents/32874\\_40\\_519051.PDF](http://interchange.puc.texas.gov/Documents/32874_40_519051.PDF).