



STATE OF WASHINGTON

— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE —

**PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR
AMENDING AND EXTENDING EMERGENCY
PROCLAMATION 20-05 and RESCINDING 20-23, et seq.**

20-23.17

Ratepayer Assistance and Preservation of Essential Services

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, I issued Proclamation 20-05, proclaiming a State of Emergency for all counties throughout Washington State of as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and confirmed person-to-person spread of COVID-19 in Washington State; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the continued worldwide spread of COVID-19, its continued persistence in Washington State, and the high risk it continues to pose to our most vulnerable populations, I have subsequently issued several amendatory proclamations, exercising my emergency powers under RCW 43.06.220 by prohibiting certain activities and waiving and suspending specified laws and regulations; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 disease, caused by a virus that spreads easily from person to person which may result in serious illness or death and has been classified by the World Health Organization as a worldwide pandemic, continues to persist as an ongoing threat in Washington State; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a global economic slowdown and an economic downturn in Washington State, which resulted in layoffs and reduced work hours for a significant percentage of our workforce and significant reductions in business activity impacting the commercial sectors that support our state's economic vitality, including severe impacts to the large number of small businesses that make Washington State's economy thrive; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has limited the available financial resources of many of our people and businesses with many of them suffering considerable economic hardship as a result of the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economy, resulting in a significant threat of utility services being disconnected and late payment fees being imposed; and

WHEREAS, maintaining provision of utility services during this crisis is an essential tool in sustaining and protecting the health and welfare of our people and businesses as a critical part of the overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission regulates the rates and services of investor-owned utilities in Washington State and is coordinating with utilities throughout the State to protect the availability and affordability of essential utility services for those economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through a variety of measures, including: suspending disconnection of utilities for nonpayment, waiving late fees, working with affected utility customers to establish payment arrangements, and improving access to energy assistance for affected customers; and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020, I issued Proclamation 20-23, waiving and suspending statutes and prohibiting certain activities relating to utility services; and

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2020, I issued Proclamation 20-23.1, amending and continuing the waivers and suspension of statutes and the prohibitions of certain activities relating to utility services; and

WHEREAS, under the provisions of RCW 43.06.220(4), the statutory waivers and suspensions in Proclamations 20-23, et seq., have been periodically extended by the leadership of the Washington State Senate and House of Representatives, and which I acknowledged and similarly extended the prohibitions therein; and

WHEREAS, on January 15, 2021, under the provisions of RCW 43.06.220(4), the statutory waivers and suspensions of Proclamation 20-23, et seq., were extended by Senate Concurrent Resolution 8402 until the termination of the state of emergency pursuant to RCW 43.06.210, or until rescinded, whichever occurs first, and which I acknowledged and similarly extended the prohibitions therein; and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2021, I amended 20-23, et seq., to extend the prohibitions on disconnecting, refusing to reconnect, and charging late fees until termination of the COVID-19 State of Emergency or 11:59 p.m. on July 31, 2021, whichever comes first; and

WHEREAS, the prohibitions on disconnecting, refusing to reconnect, and charging late fees related to residential customers of energy, telecommunications, or water service in this proclamation, as amended, were terminated on September 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, although the COVID-19 disease continues to persist as an ongoing and present threat in Washington State, the measures we have taken together as Washingtonians over the past 26 months, including the willingness of Washingtonians to take advantage of the remarkable, life-saving vaccines being administered throughout the state, have made a difference and have altered the course of the pandemic in fundamental ways; and

WHEREAS, although Department of Health statistics reflect the continued persistence of COVID-19 and support the continuation of the state of emergency, health experts and epidemiological modeling experts believe that as a state we have made adequate progress against COVID-19 to rescind and/or modify amendatory proclamations related to specific health issues and activities; and

WHEREAS, there are no remaining elements of Proclamation 20-23, et seq., that are necessary to address the COVID-19 pandemic at this time; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Department of Health continues to maintain a Public Health Incident Management Team in coordination with the State Emergency Operations Center and other supporting state agencies to manage the public health aspects of the incident; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Military Department Emergency Management Division, through the State Emergency Operations Center, continues coordinating resources across state government to support the Washington State Department of Health and local health officials in alleviating the impacts to people, property, and infrastructure, and continues coordinating with the Department of Health in assessing the impacts and long-term effects of the incident on Washington State and its people.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, as a result of the above-noted situation, and under Chapters 38.08, 38.52 and 43.06 RCW, do hereby proclaim that a State of Emergency continues to exist in all counties of Washington State, that Proclamation 20-05 and amendments thereto remain in effect, and that Proclamation 20-23, et seq., is terminated and rescinded effective immediately.

I again direct that the plans and procedures of the *Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan* be implemented throughout state government. State agencies and departments are directed to continue utilizing state resources and doing everything reasonably possible to support implementation of the *Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan* and to assist affected political subdivisions in an effort to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

I continue to order into active state service the organized militia of Washington State to include the National Guard and the State Guard, or such part thereof as may be necessary in the opinion of The Adjutant General to address the circumstances described above, to perform such duties as directed by competent authority of the Washington State Military Department in addressing the outbreak. Additionally, I continue to direct the Washington State Department of Health, the Washington State Military Department Emergency Management Division, and other agencies to identify and provide appropriate personnel for conducting necessary and ongoing incident related assessments.

