

**MONTANA-DAKOTA UTILITIES CO.  
SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
FIRST DATA REQUEST ISSUED MAY 8, 2020  
RESPONSES DUE MAY 22, 2020  
DOCKET NO. GE20-002**

- 1-7. If the Company chose to temporarily discontinue disconnections and/or late payment fees, provide the Company's reasoning for doing so and the other alternatives the Company discussed.

**Response:**

Natural Gas and Electric services are essential to the health and safety of Montana-Dakota's customers and the Company anticipated COVID-19 would significantly impact customers' ability to work, and therefore, pay their bills in full and/or by the due date. The Company's decision to suspend disconnects for non-pay was primarily intended to ensure our customers were not at risk of losing these essential services during the pandemic.

In addition, beginning in early March, states within our service territories were issuing social distancing guidelines, stay home orders, and orders mandating moratoriums on utility disconnects (issued by some of the states in which we serve customers). As a result, Montana-Dakota suspended many order types in its service territories over a period of a few weeks. This action was taken to ensure the Company and its employees were in compliance with these state guidelines and orders, which were intended to ensure the health and safety of customers and employees. Disconnects for non-pay was the first order type suspended effective March 16, 2020. Late payment fees were suspended on April 1, 2020.

The Company did not consider any other alternatives as, considering the severity of the pandemic and the pending economic impact, suspending disconnects for non-pay and late payment fees was the most prudent decision for customers and employees.