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State of New Jersey

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October 15, 2021

Dear Program Partner:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our residents have struggled to pay their utility bills. As you know, the State's grace period on utility shut-offs **expires on December 31, 2021**. After that date, anyone with a past due balance will risk **disconnection**. The good news is there are many utility assistance programs available to provide residents the financial relief they need. I am happy to say several of the State's utility assistance programs have significantly increased their income limits so that more households can access these benefits. To raise awareness of these valuable resources, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPUB) is coordinating "**Utility Assistance Week**" **October 18 - 22, 2021**.

NJBPUB along with our State partners and the utilities will be *amplifying* our existing collective outreach efforts to help spread the word about available assistance programs, namely:

- [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#) (LIHEAP)
- [Universal Service Fund](#) (USF)
- [USF-Fresh Start \(energy debt forgiveness\)](#)
- [Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric](#) (PAGE)
- [Emergency Rental Assistance](#), which covers utilities included in rental costs
- Deferred Payment Agreements through the utility companies
- The [Utility Customer's Bill of Rights](#)
- [2-1-1](#) as a 24/7 referral source for utility assistance as well as other helpful programs

For your convenience, we have created a [Utility Assistance Week Communications Toolkit](#) that includes brochures, messaging, hashtags, and graphics for your use. Please feel free to share these resources across your municipal websites, newsletters, local access TV, robo-calls, and social media. Contact Tina.Notaro@bpu.nj.gov (609-610-3328) should you have any questions.

I appreciate anything you can do to help get the word out to your constituents that if they are behind on their bills, they should not wait to reach out for help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Fiordaliso".

Joseph L. Fiordaliso
NJBPUB President