

In the matter of the Proposed Emergency Cold Weather Rule
Case No. GX-2006-0181

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These comments are the response of our organization to the Proposed Emergency Cold Weather Rule Case above. We deal with many low income individuals who will need assistance with their gas utility bills in the cold weather months each year. This year with the huge increase in the cost of heat for homes, we are beginning to experience even more persons who need assistance.

The idea of receiving a \$60 bill for gas during the CWR sounds good, but what will happen when this period ends at the end of March 2006? And.....what will happen to those with electric heat, which is not under this Emergency CWR plan? Imagine what they (and our organization) will be faced with when the "real" bill is sent! Then,.... will they then have their utility cut off if they can't pay? We are an agency of last resort, which means that if we don't have enough funding to help all of those who need it, they will go without. What will happen to those who are unfortunate enough to apply to us when our funds for this service run out?

I understand that the PSC has also recommended that service be restored to those with a gas cutoff, for 50% of the arrears, or \$500, (whichever is less) to these people during the CWR. Is this also to be extended after the CWR ends? My concern here, either way, is still,... Where are these people going to get the funds for this reconnect? Our clients are kidney patients who are on dialysis. Many of them are unable to work at all, and those who do work are on a greatly reduced schedule due to the lengthy dialysis treatments three days a week.

While costs increase for heat, their income does not increase. It will only stretch so far before it is gone. We are greatly concerned about these people in the months ahead.