

Washington State Energy Economic Taskforce:

Electric & Natural Gas Utilities Economic Impact
Survey Analysis for March through May 2020



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Executive Summary

The Electric & Natural Gas Utilities Economic Impact Survey Analysis for March through May 2020 provides insight into how COVID-19 has affected utilities and their customer's ability to pay their utility bills.

- 1) According to the responses to this survey, electric and natural gas utilities expect to have a decrease in revenue due to customers' inability to pay for services. This expectation is based on initial projections of customer's inability to make a payment or set up payment arrangements past 30 days or more from April through the end of May 2020.
- 2) Surveyed electric and natural gas utilities responded that they recorded an increase of \$35,988,949.91 in deferred bill payments from March through May 2020.

The electric and natural gas utility economic impact survey sought to understand and document impacts of COVID-19 on load demand changes, potential economic impacts to the viability of utilities and economic impacts on the customer base and ability to pay for essential utilities, such as electricity and natural gas.

To more effectively understand the economic impacts on surveyed utility providers, we asked a series of questions to gain additional insight for the initial three month Stay Home and Stay Safe order due to COVID-19. Several providers provided estimates on an anticipated loss of revenue. To understand the scope of the potential economic impact to utilities and to their customers, utilities were asked for a dollar amount of bills deferred under Proclamation 20-23. A total of 22,053 households filed and received assistance, which amounted to \$9,228,406.00 for both gas and electric utilities.

Based on the results of this survey recommendations include:

- Continue using funding from the Washington State Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to subsidize low-income utility customers.
- Consider using CARES ACT funds to mitigate impacts of COVID-19 on the state's residential energy customers.
- A review of best practices from other states on supporting small business' ability to pay for essential utilities and determine if such options can be added into existing programs, or if existing programs could be modified to support small business energy bill pay assistance.

Background

In March of 2020, Governor Inslee issued [Proclamation 20-23 UTC - Ratepayer Assistance](#) (Proclamation 20-23) which directed all essential utilities in Washington State to suspend disconnection of utilities for nonpayment. Proclamation 20-23 directs essential utilities to waive late fees, work with affected utility customers to establish payment arrangements and to improve access to energy assistance for affected customers. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to cause a sustained global economic slowdown, which is anticipated to cause a continued downturn in Washington State. This downturn is expected to result in layoffs and reduced work hours for a significant percentage of our state's workforce and reduction in business activity impacting our commercial sectors. Maintaining utility services during this crisis is an essential part of sustaining and protecting the health and welfare of our people and businesses and is a critical part of the overall response to COVID-19.

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) is the state agency lead in charge of implementing energy emergency management contingency plans in coordination with key stakeholders. To support the transition from response to recovery, the Energy Emergency Management Director created the Energy Economic Taskforce to collaborate with stakeholders on how to best evaluate impacts related to COVID-19. See Appendix A for the taskforce charter purpose statement. The taskforce developed this first survey to document and identify economic impacts to electric and natural gas utilities. To give additional context to survey responses, relevant data was collected from the Washington State Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) program, the Employment Services Department (ESD) and from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). The result of this effort is a set of recommendations to the Governor's Office based on findings about financial impacts of COVID-19 on electricity and natural gas utilities and their customers. The goal is to develop mitigation strategies to support state energy consumers and essential utility providers through short-term and intermediate economic recovery.

Ongoing response and recovery actions to COVID-19 (figure 1, below) are focused on human and economic factors rather than physical damage to infrastructure as they typically would be after a storm or earthquake. Documenting initial economic impacts requires additional data sources to gain a better understanding of the scope of impact to the energy sector, and to assist in developing strategic solutions for short-term and intermediate recovery. Figure 1 below demonstrates where the state is currently at in terms of recovery process activities. The visual below shows [Safe Start Washington Phases 1-4](#), which is part of the state's short-term recovery plan. This is the best estimate of where the state is currently at in the recovery process. Not knowing when COVID-19 will end makes this process ambiguous as there could be set-backs if the virus continues to have a resurgence or if the state experiences a second wave in the fall/winter seasons.

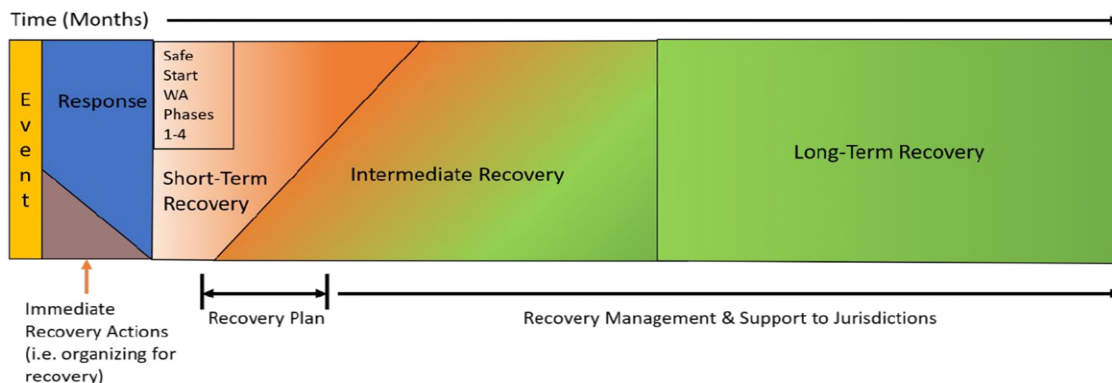


Figure 1. Washington State Recovery timeframe reference, Washington Recovery Restoration Framework specific to COVID-19.

Key Findings

The electric and natural gas utilities economic impact survey (survey) was open for 10 working days and closed on June 10, 2020. The survey received 34 individual responses prior to the analysis conducted from those who responded. This represented 90.984% of total electric customers and 99.99% of total natural gas customers in Washington State. The base number of customers came from 2018 Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data (HIFLD). Customers represent meters, not individuals or households.

The two key findings from the survey are presented here:

Customer Impacts

Bill pay assistance exceeds current financial supply

Surveyed electric and natural gas utilities responded that they recorded an increase of \$35,988,949.91 in deferred bill payments from March through May 2020, broken down into each month as follows:

- March 2020 - \$8,921,425.22
- April 2020 - \$13,478,384.77
- May 2020 - \$13,589,139.92

The surveyed electric and natural gas utilities supported their customer base by providing \$16,581,695 in additional energy bill assistance, and they continue to recommend that customers should contact communication action programs to access LIHEAP energy bill assistance.

Several utilities also indicated support for expanding funding for Washington's LIHEAP program to help impacted customers pay for essential utilities.

The LIHEAP program distributed a total of \$9,228,406 funds for electric and natural gas from Mar. 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020.

Utility Impacts

Electric and natural gas utilities expect to have a decrease in revenue due to customers' inability to pay for services.

This expectation is based on initial projections of customer's inability to make a payment or set up payment arrangements past 30 days or more from April through the end of May 2020. It should be noted that data collected from this first survey on customer impacts could be from a variety of causes and changes in collection operations, and may also include other economic impacts that are being experienced due to COVID-19.

Recommendations

Recommendations comprised are from the taskforce and from the survey, they are as follows:

- Continue to use funding from the Washington State Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to subsidize utilities
- Request an increase in available funds from the CARES ACT funds to mitigate impacts of COVID-19 on the state's residential energy customers.
- Review best practices from other states on supporting small business' ability to pay for essential utilities, ([e.g. Iowa Small Business Utility Bill Disruption Prevention Program, TVA Offers Incentives for UV-C light](#))

[germicidal lights](#)) and determine if such options can be added into existing programs, or if existing programs could be modified to support small business energy bill pay assistance.

Next Steps

The Energy Emergency Management Program have already taken steps to address and the following implement recommendations.

- Promote these assistance programs to county governments and utilities not currently taking advantage of these subsidies. Included a resource link on the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Commerce website to capture COVID-19 electric and natural gas rate payer assistance resources from utilities.
- Revise Proclamation 20-23 to clarify that customers are still required to pay their utility bills through flexible payment arrangements.
- The Energy Economic Taskforce will continue to monitor financial impacts of COVID-19 on a quarterly basis, develop a report, and coordinate with the Washington Recovery Group.
- Coordinating with the Washington Public Works Board of the capital projects needed to support critical infrastructure with the inclusion of the energy sector.

Survey Results Discussion

The electric and natural gas utility economic impact survey sought to understand and document impacts of COVID-19 on load demand changes, potential economic impacts to the viability of utilities and economic impacts on the customer base and ability to pay for essential utilities, such as electricity and natural gas.

This 34 question survey was sent out on Wed. May 27, 2020, with a response deadline for close of business on June 10, 2020. (The online survey tool had 54 questions based on system limits in design; survey questions available are upon request.) The survey generated 36 responses with an 83% question completion rate. **Those who responded represent 90% of the state's electric customers and 99.9% of the state's natural gas customers.**

With the assistance of the Washington Public Utility Districts Association, Washington Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Association of Washington Cities, Utility and Transportation Commission, and other members of the Energy Economic Taskforce advisory group, the survey was developed and emailed out to all of the electric and natural gas utilities who have a service territory in Washington State.

Customer Impacts

To identify and document the economic impacts of COVID-19 on the energy sector, utilities are tracking the impacts to their customer base. Survey questions 5 through 10 asked about customers' ability to pay or setup payment arrangements. This section asked utilities to document difference between 2019 and 2020 for the same months on the number of disconnects for non-payment that would have taken place without Proclamation 20-23, and asked if any bills were deferred for other reasons.

Surveyed energy utilities identified a significant increase in customers exceeding 30 days or more in their ability to make a payment or setup a payment arrangement, and provided numbers of customers that would have received a disconnect notice from March through May if not for the Proclamation 20-23 (and updates). The survey requested an estimated impact for June, but the majority of utilities did not provide data so we were unable to include information for June in this report.

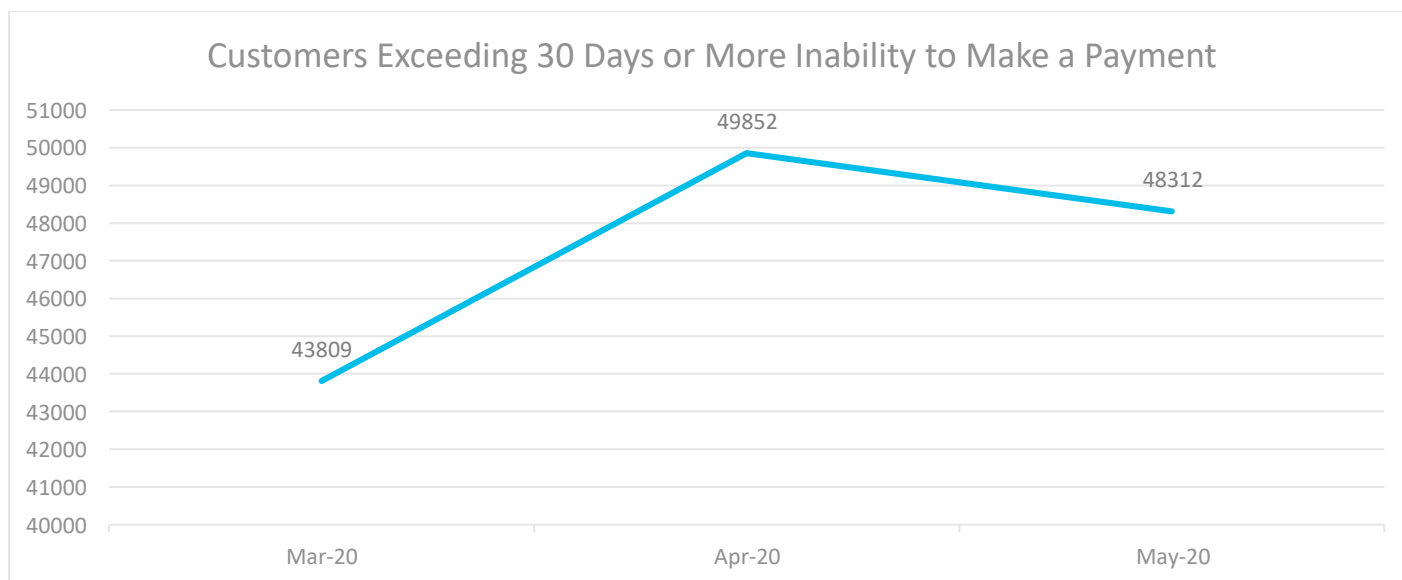


Figure 1. Results from question 5, which asks, "Number of customers that exceed 30 days or more in ability to make payment who have arranged for a payment (plus carry over from previous months)."

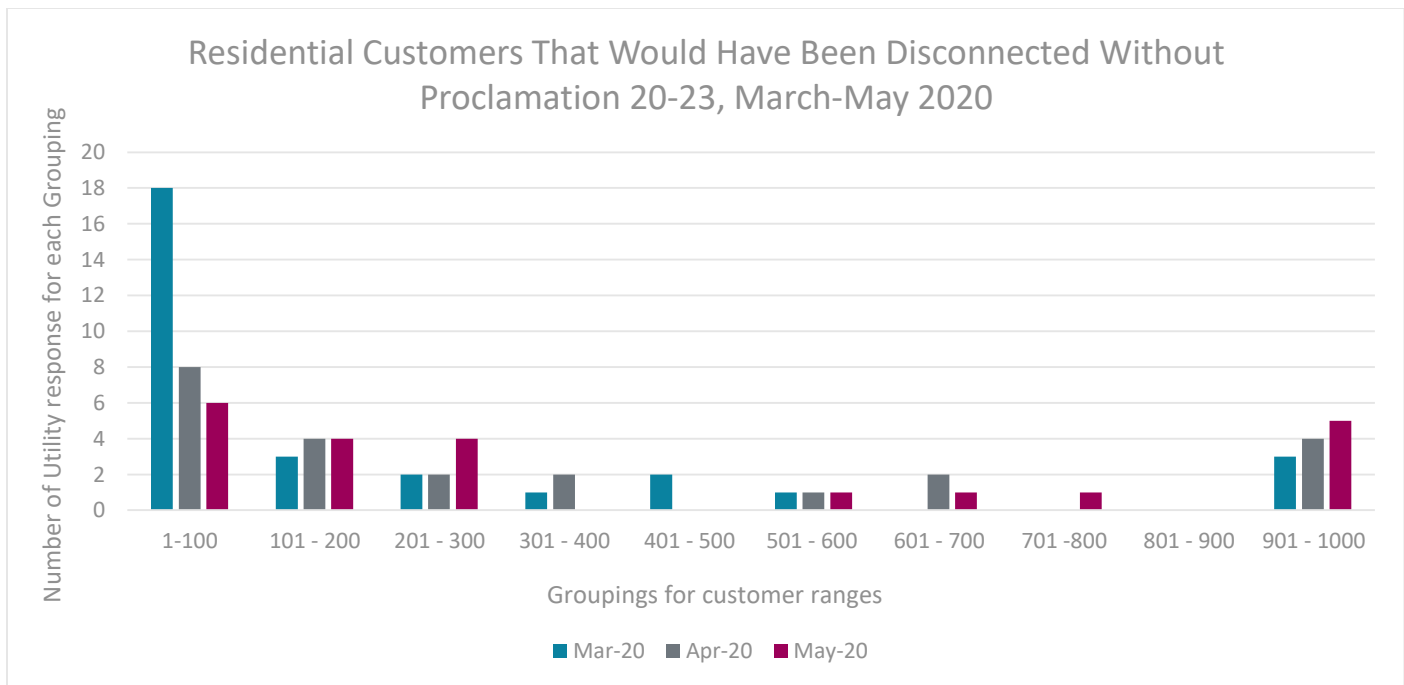


Figure 2. Results from question 6 for 2020, which asks, "The number of residential customers disconnected for non-payment from 2019 and for 2020 the number that would have been disconnected if not for Proclamation 20-23 (updates & extensions).

To provide a comparison base each month set of figure 3 residential customers and figure 4 commercial customers (data collection was incomplete for commercial customers for 2020 timeframe) below demonstrate the differences from 2019 and 2020 for March - May.

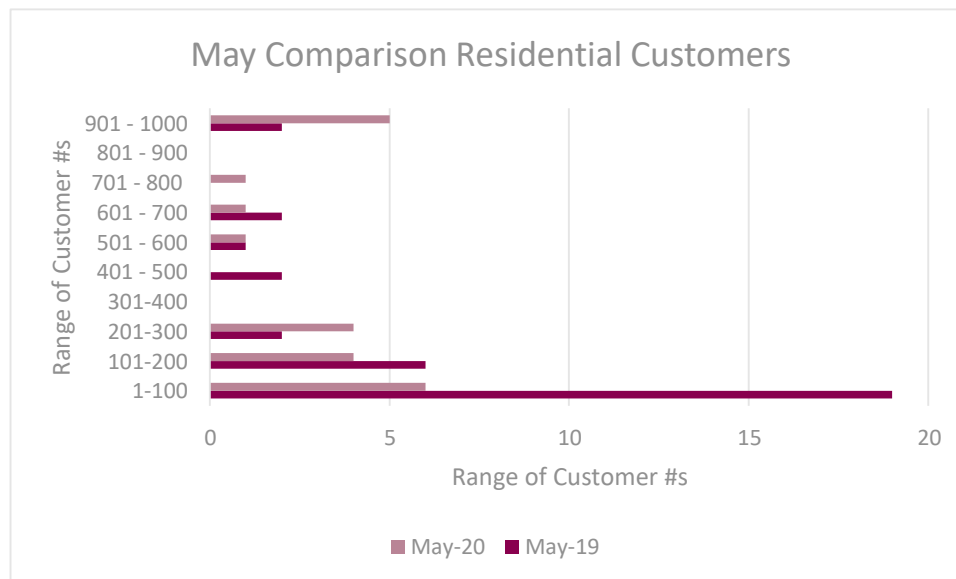
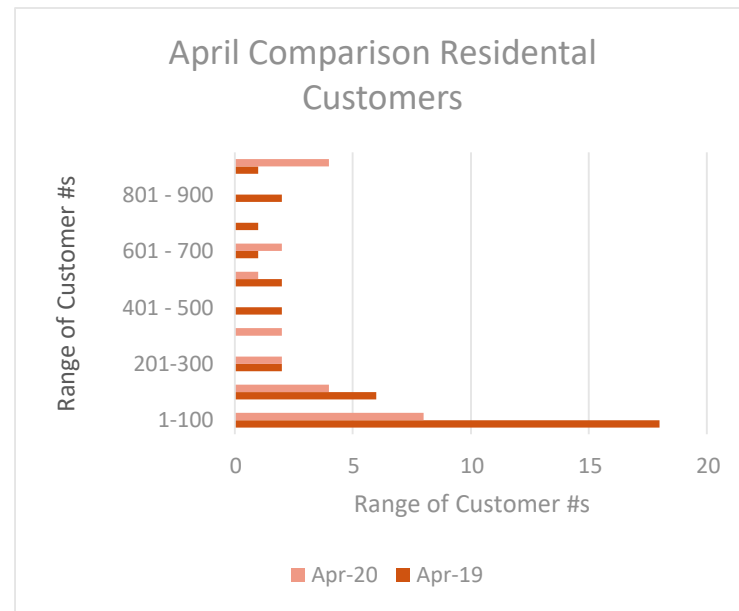
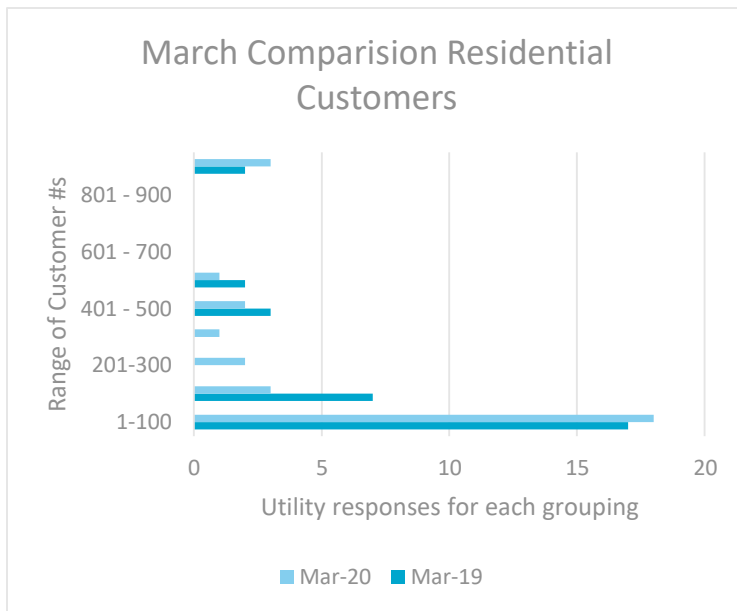


Figure 3. Results from question 6 for 2019, which asks, "The number of residential customers disconnected for non-payment from 2019 and for 2020 the number that would have been disconnected if not for Proclamation 20-23 (updates & extensions).

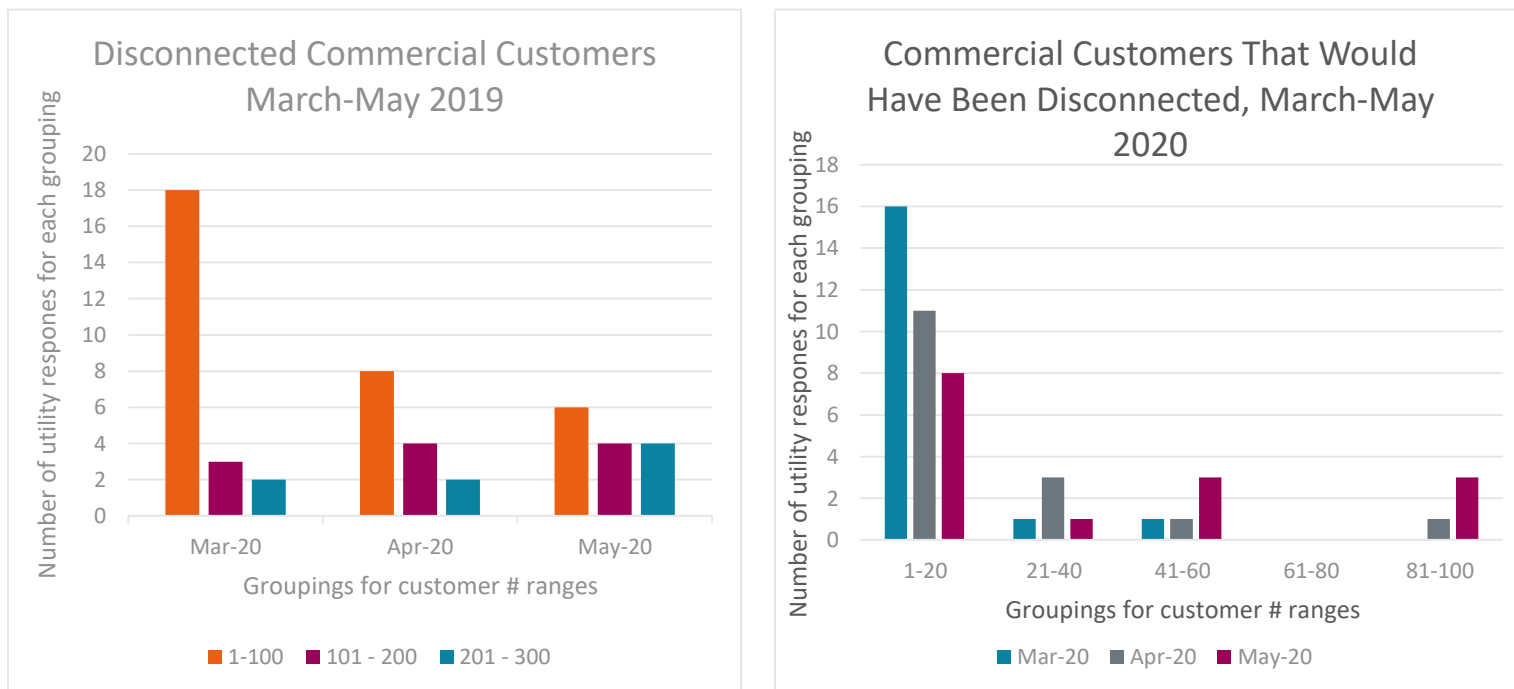


Figure 4. Results from question 7 for 2019, which asks, "The number of Commercial customers disconnected for non-payment from 2019 and for 2020 the number that would have been disconnected if not for Proclamation 20-13 (updates & extensions).

To understand the scope of the potential economic impact to utilities and to their customers, utilities were asked for a dollar amount of bills deferred under Proclamation 20-23. This data only includes March - May since there were limited responses for June estimates. We also requested information from the LIHEAP program that covers the same time frame (Mar. 1 - June 30, 2020). A total of 22,053 households filed and received assistance, which amounted to \$9,228,406.00 for both gas and electric utilities.

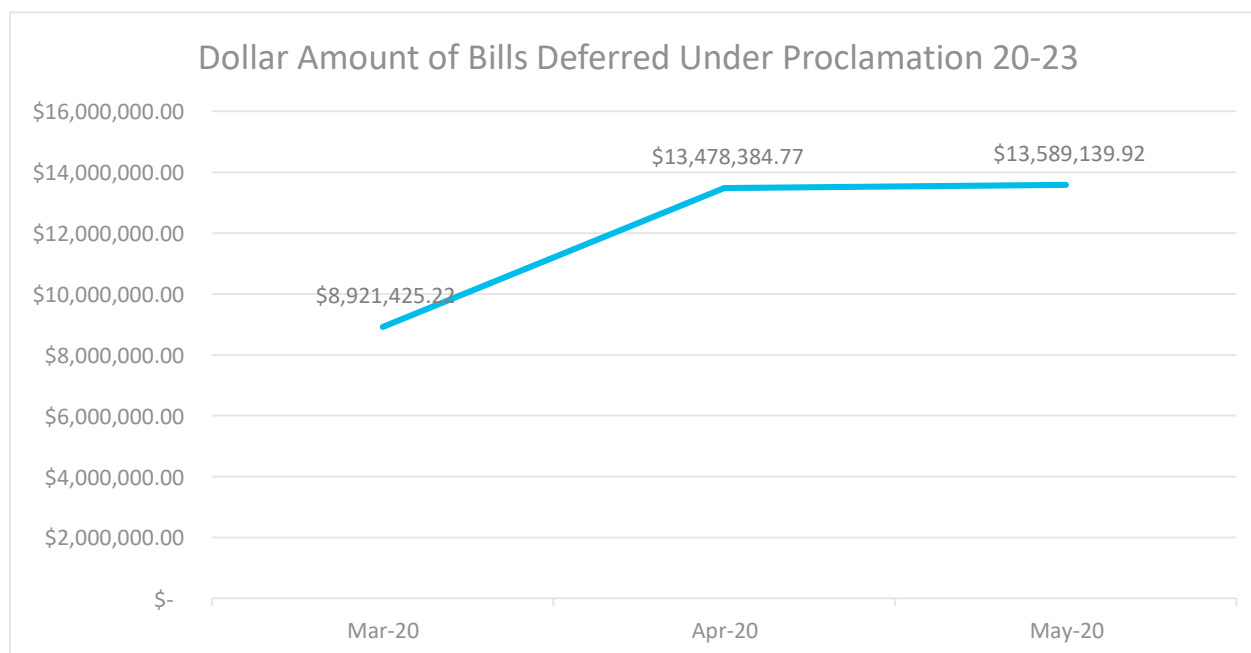


Figure 4. Results from question 9 which asks, "What is the dollar amount of customer bills deferred specifically under the Proclamation 20-23 (updates & extensions)". No data was submitted to show the difference between this year and prior years.

Utility Economic Impacts & Employee Considerations

To more effectively understand the economic impacts on surveyed utility providers, we asked a series of questions to gain additional insight for the initial three month Stay Home and Stay Safe order due to COVID-19. Several providers provided estimates on an anticipated loss of revenue and some were not able to provide an estimate due to legal restrictions.

Questions 11 through 22 asked if the utility was anticipating any economic impacts, to what extent, and what measures they have considered because of the potential for those economic impacts. Questions 23 through 27 inquired about employee considerations and concerns, and questions 28 through 30 addressed customer assistance.

For those who did respond to the questions, 23 indicated yes they are experiencing a loss of revenue as a result of bill non-payment, 4 - no loss of revenue, 6 - unknown, and 2 - other; indicating they were unable to provide the information. We also asked if they anticipate a loss of revenue as a result of bill non-payment: 26 - yes, 1 - no, 6 - unknown, 2 - other; the unknown made reference that is it challenging to make this assessment in the middle of COVID-19. In addition, we also tried to gauge the overall initial financial impact on utility providers using the following metric: no impact, low impact (recover within 12 months of normal operations), moderate impact (recover within 18 months of normal operations), high impact (recovery within 24 months of normal operations), and extreme impact (utility may not financially recover), other.

We had responses that indicated that it was difficult to provide an estimate mid-pandemic with the uncertainty of duration, and that their impacts were dependent upon re-opening and state wide economic recovery. Below is a figure from the initial responses. Since this was the first three month period of the initial impact from the COVID-19 Stay Home and Stay Safe order, there is an assumption that future responses will change depending on the duration of the pandemic and the overall state of the economy.

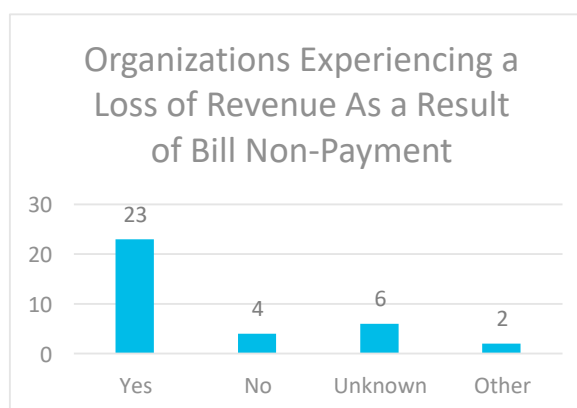
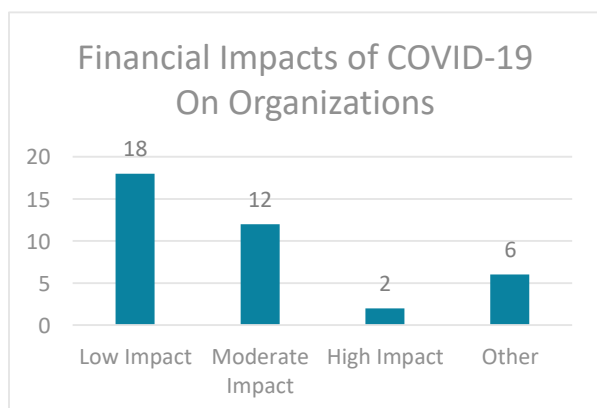


Figure 5. Results from the question 19 which asks, "How do you rate the financial impacts of COVID-19 on your utility?"(To the left)

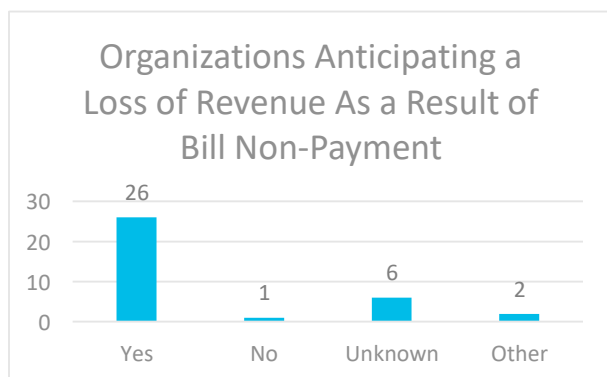
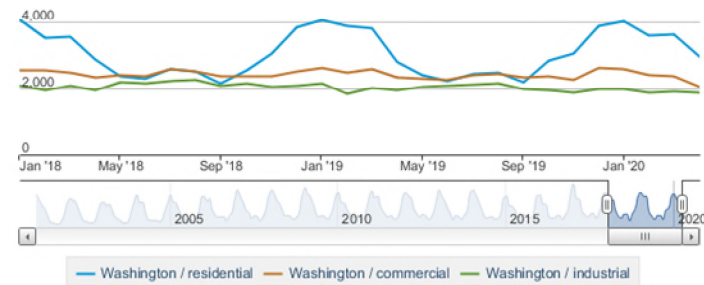


Figure 6. Results from questions (11, 12) which asks, "Is your organization experiencing a loss of revenue as a result of bill non-payment" & "Is your organization anticipating a loss of revenue as a result of bill non-payment".

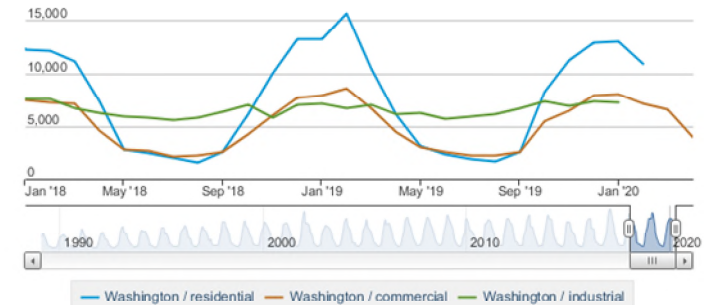
Retail sales of electricity by end-use sector, monthly

million kilowatthours



Natural gas delivered to consumers, monthly

million cubic feet



eia Form EIA-861M, Monthly Electric Power Industry Report
Form EIA-861, Annual Electric Power Industry Report

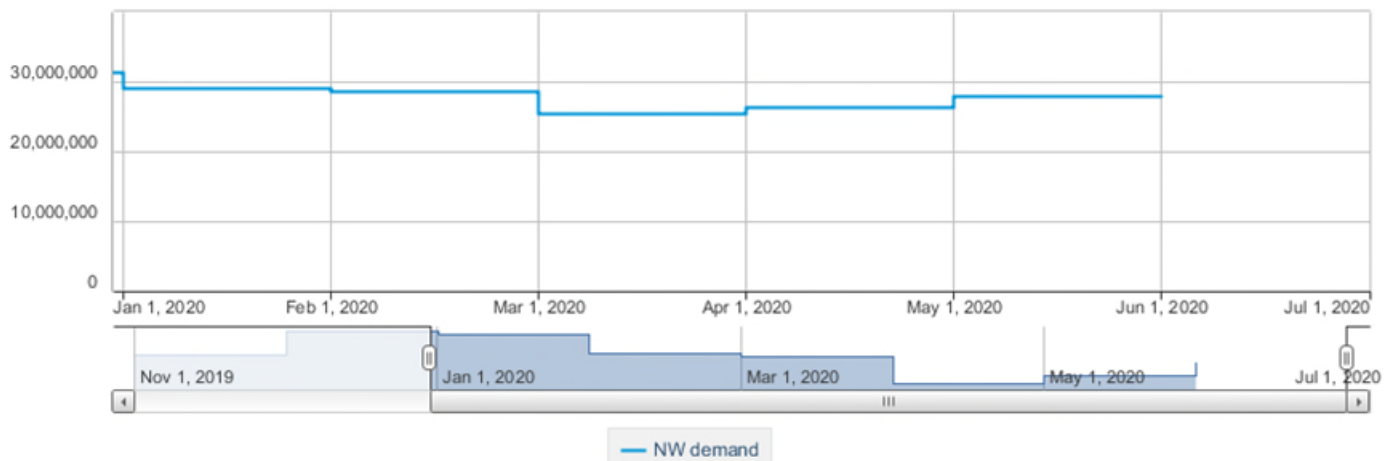
Figure 7. Retail sales of electricity by end-use sector, monthly

eia Natural Gas Monthly

Figure 8. Natural gas delivered to consumers, monthly

Regional monthly actual demand 11/01/2019 – 07/01/2020, EDT

megawatthours



eia Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Figure 9. Regional monthly actual demand 11/01/2019 - 07/01/2020

The survey had a question about estimating load changes, however based on responses it was challenging for utilities to complete the analysis process of the survey. We asked about load changes over the past several months due to variations caused by stay at home orders, and the feedback we received is that it is still too early to capture that level of detail. For the purpose of capturing the data below, references are made to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) on retail sales of electricity by customer class (monthly) figure 7, natural gas delivered to consumers (monthly) figure 8, and regional monthly actual demand (11/01/2019 - 07-01/2020) figure 9. Figure 7 and 8 are also correlated to seasonal temperatures. If additional weather data is needed, the taskforce can request data from the National Weather Service Seattle Office.

In addition to understanding financial impacts of COVID-19, we also included questions to better understand impacts to the essential workers who provide maintenance and emergency restoration. The energy sector took steps early on to ensure the safety of their employees so they could continue working during the initial Stay home and Stay Safe order to ensure the continued reliability of essential utility services.

Out of the majority of respondents to the survey, 23 indicated no concern with their staffing levels, 10 indicated a moderate level of concern, 1 high concern, and 3 indicated other. We inquired about additional expenses to implement teleworking for non-essential employees who did not need to report to a physical location. We also asked questions regarding the amount spent on providing personal protective equipment (PPE) specifically for COVID-19 mitigation measures. Dependent upon guidance from the Emergency Management Division, we will direct consumer owned utilities to connect with their county emergency management agencies for inclusion of costs expended potentially eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

Additional considerations and changes in employment practices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Leaving vacant positions unfilled
- Not filling non-essential vacant positions
- Offering early retirement incentives
- Implementing furloughs, and/or voluntary furloughs
- Instituting a hiring freeze
- Restructuring line crews for social distancing and health and safety measures
- No changes to employment practices
- Non-essential employees continuing to telework

The survey also inquired about the top four priorities of each organization and requested to identify capital projects that could be implemented in the next two years. For those who responded, the majority indicated that staffing health and safety was their first priority, the second and third priorities were evenly split between economic impacts on customers and financial health of the utility, and the fourth priority was a evenly split between the remaining options and a few write in options (e.g. capital improvement financial, access to public and private funding), declining rate based revenue from reduced demand/load, and availability of repair parts or equipment).

For the capital projects list, the survey asked utilities to also identify projects funded by the Washington State Clean Energy Fund (CEF). The information has been shared with Commerce's Energy Division. The remaining capital projects that were submitted through the survey and additional attachments provided by utilities will be shared with the Washington State Infrastructure System Improvement Team under the Public Works Board (SYNC) that connects and coordinates with other critical infrastructure sector partners. The intent behind this work is to develop strategic recommendations to support capital projects for economic recovery statewide.

Customer Assistance

To understand the scope of the potential economic impact to both utilities and to their customers, utilities were asked for a dollar amount for bills deferred under Proclamation 20-23. This data includes March through May. We also requested information from the LIHEAP program that covers the same time frame (Mar. 1 through June 30, 2020). A total of 22,053 households filed and received assistance, with a total dollar amount of \$9,228,406.00 for both gas and electric utilities were paid out for energy bill assistance.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides energy bill assistance to low-income residents across the state of Washington. The typical LIHEAP application period for home heating assistance runs from Oct. 1 through Sep. 30 annually. In response to COVID-19 and the anticipated increase in unemployment due to the Stay home and Stay Safe order, the LIHEAP program made some modifications in March. These modifications include a secondary benefit of \$500 made available to those impacted by COVID-19, allowing digital application signatures, remote applications, eligibility based on one month of income instead of three months, increased funding available for rental assistance and furnace repair and replacement.

Income limits for program applicants are set at 125% of the federal poverty level. LIHEAP primarily assists households by applying an energy assistance grant directly to the energy providers on behalf of the eligible household. The purpose of this program is to assist low-income households in meeting their immediate home energy needs. The five year program average amount of assistance is \$29.5 million per year.

The survey inquired if utilities offered an energy rate or fixed charge discount to low-income customers. From those who responded, 16 indicated no and 22 indicated yes. A total of 69,635 customers received the discount, and the total dollar amount of discounts provided was \$6,444,297.00. We also inquired if any of the surveyed utilities have stopped funding optional programs such as weatherization and rebates. Of those who responded none have stopped funding the mentioned programs. We also requested the estimated amount that utilities have spent on energy assistance from Mar. 1 through June when the survey closed, which includes other actions the utilities have done to support their customers beyond low-income reduced rates. The total amount of bill assistance provided by utilities who responded was \$16,581,695.00. Utilities were given an opportunity to provide what other actions they have taken to support customers who need assistance with their energy bills.

The following is a selection from all responses:

- Budget billing programs based upon monthly income (especially helpful for those on fixed incomes)
- Individual utility rate assistance programs
- Long-term payment arrangements
- The Helping Hands program
- Waived reconnection fees for customers who were without power prior to the suspension of disconnects
- COVID-19 specific utility relief programs
- Directing customers to LIHEAP and local community action programs (CAP)
- Offering qualified customers a one-time payment up to \$200
- Help connecting to other local community support systems

Recovery Recommendations

Survey questions 31 through 34 asked about capital projects that are ready for implementation within the next two years, asked utilities to identify their top four priorities and asked how the state could support those priorities along with the economic recovery of the energy sector and their customers.

Several utilities shared their list of construction projects. We plan to take the information provided and coordinate with the Public Works board SYNC group that focuses on critical infrastructure projects. The goal is to coordinate with stakeholders across different sectors. The report also includes feedback on priorities for economic recovery for the sector and their customers. These are recorded in the recommendations section of the report.

Based on the feedback collected from the survey, the state has already taken several steps to implement the recommendations mentioned at the beginning of this report. The LIHEAP webpage includes a reference link to all of the [electric and natural gas utilities rate payer assistance resources](#). The update to Proclamation 20-23 includes language to clarify that utility customers are still required to pay their bills when they are able, and are encouraged to set up bill payment arrangements. The response and recovery to the pandemic remains dynamic and to support coordination the Commerce Energy Emergency Management Program and the Energy Economic Taskforce will continue to coordinate with the state's utility partners and document the economic impacts during the response and recovery to COVID 19.

Appendices

Appendix A - Washington State Energy Economic Taskforce Charter Purpose

This document is supporting the Washington Recovery Framework and the Infrastructure System Recovery Support Function (IS RSF) for recovery activities in response to the SARS-CoV-2 virus global pandemic. The IS RSF is focused on physical damage to infrastructure. However, during the global pandemic, the economic recovery is focused more broadly on ensuring that critical infrastructure is maintained, and that vulnerable individuals and families retain access to essential services.

Recognizing that the mitigation tactics to help reduce the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus have operational and economic impacts on the energy sector, the purpose of the Energy Economic Impacts Taskforce is to facilitate discussion, data-sharing, and coordination among the state's energy sector partners, and coordination across infrastructure sectors to help meet the goals of the Washington Economic Recovery Framework.

The Energy Economic Taskforce:

- Provides a platform and structure to facilitate collaboration and integration among public and private critical energy sector organizations and the state's economic recovery planning functions.
- Provides operators and owners a method of identifying and communicating issues that affect the return of energy business workers to the work place.
- Builds strong working relationships across multiple levels of government and non-government sectors to support the economic recovery of the state's energy sector partners.
- Facilitates the collection of information about energy assistance resources for the public.
- Allows the Energy Emergency Management Program to gain situational awareness from critical energy sector partners and better understanding of economic priorities, support shared decision making which could influence regional recovery plans, and any interdependencies with other critical infrastructure partners.

In order to identify, document, and provide strategic economic recovery recommendations the Energy Economic Taskforce will develop tools in order to analyze quantitative and qualitative trends and indicators to understand and document the economic impact of SARS-CoV-2 virus mitigation strategies on the energy sector and customers of energy providers. To support the Unified Coordinating Group goal to maintain the critical infrastructure of society the taskforce will identify and document short, intermediate, and long-term economic recovery strategies to support the economic viability and continued reliability of the energy sector. This work will support Washington's overarching priorities for enabling a resilient, low-carbon, clean energy future.

Appendix B - Service territories aligned with ESD unemployment data (continued claims May 2020)

This appendix is the best attempt at aligning utility service territories and county unemployment data in order to capture a snapshot in time of the economic impacts for customers and utilities due to COVID-19 for May 2020. For specific data from ESD please visit the [Unemployment insurance claims information \(monthly\) dashboard](#).

County	Continued Claim Numbers	Electric Utility	Natural Gas Utility
Adams	943	Big Bend Electric COOP Avista	Cascade Natural Gas Avista
Asotin	524	Avista Asotin PUD	Avista Cascade Natural Gas
Benton	11,143	Benton PUD Benton REA City of Richland	Cascade Natural Gas
Chelan	6,364	Chelan PUD	Cascade Natural Gas
Clallam	,4510	Clallam PUD Port Angeles	
Clark	23,865	Clark PUD	Cascade Natural Gas NW Natural Gas
Columbia	154	Pacific Power Columbia REA	
Cowlitz	6,315	Cowlitz PUD	Cascade Natural Gas
Douglas	2,828	Douglas PUD	Cascade Natural Gas
Ferry	290	Avista Ferry PUD	
Franklin	4,506	Big Bend Electric COOP Franklin PUD	Cascade Natural Gas Avista
Garfield	74	Inland Light and Power Pacific Power	
Grant	4,677	Grant PUD Coulee Dam Light Dept	Cascade Natural Gas Avista
Grays Harbor	5,230	Grays Harbor PUD	Cascade Natural Gas

County	Continued Claim Numbers	Electric Utility	Natural Gas Utility
Island	4,230	Puget Sound Energy	Cascade Natural Gas
Jefferson	1,938	Jefferson PUD	
King	165,577	Seattle City Light Puget Sound Energy Tanner Electric	Puget Sound Energy Enumclaw
Kitsap	15,120	Puget Sound Energy	Cascade Natural Gas
Kittitas	2,737	Kittitas PUD City of Ellensburg Puget Sound Energy	City of Ellensburg Puget Sound Energy
Klickitat	710	Klickitat PUD	NW Natural Gas Avista
Lewis	5,075	Lewis PUD Centralia City Light Alder Mutual Light	Puget Sound Energy
Lincoln	354	Inland Light and Power Avista Modern Electric	Avista
Mason	3,513	Mason PUD #1 Mason PUD #3 McCleary Light & Power	Cascade Natural Gas
Okanogan	2,136	Nespelem Valley COOP Okanagan PUD Okanagan County COOP	
Pacific	1,084	Pacific PUD	
Pend Oreille	541	Pend Oreille PUD	Avista
Pierce	68,894	Tacoma Power Peninsula Light Company Town of Eatonville Town of Ruston City of Steilacoom Lakeview Light & Power Elmhurst Mutual Power City of Milton OHOP Mutual Alder Mutual Light Parkland Light & Water Puget Sound Energy	Puget Sound Energy

County	Continued Claim Numbers	Electric Utility	Natural Gas Utility
San Juan	1,084	ORCAS Power & Light	
Skagit	9,495	Puget Sound Energy	Cascade Natural Gas
Skamania	557	Skamania PUD	NW Natural Gas Avista
Snohomish	67,809	Snohomish PUD	Puget Sound Energy
Spokane	34,120	Inland Light and Power Avista City of Cheney Vera Water & Power Modern Electric	Avista
Stevens	2061	Avista City of Chewelah	Avista
Thurston	24,271	Thurston PUD Puget Sound Energy	Puget Sound Energy
Wahkiakum	116	Wahkiakum PUD	
Walla Walla	2,811	Pacific Power	Cascade Natural Gas
Whatcom	17,222	Whatcom PUD City of Blaine Puget Sound Energy City of Sumas	Cascade Natural Gas
Whitman	1,184	Inland Light and Power Avista Modern Electric	Avista
Yakima	15,016	Pacific Power Yakama Power	Cascade Natural Gas

Appendix C - Electric and Natural Gas Utilities Economic Impact Survey Questions

1. Please provide your organization name and point of contact for follow-up questions or updated.

Organization Name	
Contact Name	
Email Address	
Phone Number	

2. Please select the energy services your utility provides (select all that apply).
3. Which options below best describe your utilities organizational structure?
4. Current number of service connections.

Residential	
Commercial	
Industrial	

5. Number of customers that exceed 30 days or more in ability to make payment who have arranged for a payment (plus carry over from previous months)

	March	April	May
Residential			
Commercial			
Industrial			

6. The number of customers disconnected for non-payment from 2019 and for 2020 the number that would have been disconnected if not for the Proclamation 20-23 (updates or extensions).

	March 2019	March 2020	April 2019	April 2020	May 2019	May 2020
Residential						
Commercial						
Industrial						

7. Compare your percentage change in loads for residential, commercial, and industrial segments in the most recent billing cycle to the same time in 2019.
8. Number of accounts closed for each month.

	March 2019	March 2020	April 2019	April 2020	May 2019	May 2020
Residential						
Commercial						
Industrial						

9. What is the dollar amount of customer bills deferred specifically under the Governors Proclamation 20-23 (including updates and extensions)?

	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020
Residential			
Commercial			
Industrial			

10. Dollar amount of customer bills deferred for other reasons (e.g. no winter-time shut-offs).

	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020
Residential			
Commercial			
Industrial			

11. Has your organization experienced a loss of revenue as a result of non-payment of bills compared to the same time in 2019?

12. Does your utility anticipate a loss of revenue as a result of non-payment of bills compared to the same time in 2019?
13. Compare your percentage change in utility revenue by residential, commercial, and industrial segments in the most recent billing cycle to revenue at the same time in 2019.
14. If total energy demand is down, what are the reasons you think are behind that?
For each category selected, indicate approximately the percentage of increase (+) or decrease (-) from the previous year.
15. If you are experiencing less revenue than usual, please estimate total loss of revenue in dollars (\$) from March 1 to June 30, 2020
16. Does your current billing structure include a fund balance or reserves?
17. Are you now using revenue reserves to cover operating costs?
18. How do you rate the financial impacts of COVID-19 on your utility?
19. What economic impacts do you anticipate as a result of COVID-19? Select all that apply.
20. What is your estimated days of cash on hand?
21. What is your organization's monthly expenditures for the following?

	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020
Non-extraordinary capital expenditures			
Maintenance expenditures			
Other significant expenditures			

22. What is your level of concern with maintaining required current staffing levels due to COVID-19?
 - ☐ No concern, staffing plan is complete and facility fully staffed.
 - ☐ Moderate concern, no staffing plan or reduced staff
 - ☐ High concern, no staffing plan and under-staffed.
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
23. What is your organization's dollar amount expended on equipment/ systems to allow employees to telework to date?
24. How much has your organization spent on COVID-19 related health and safety supplies for workers? (E.g. total spent on additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) related to COVID-19 mitigation measures, disinfectant, etc.)
25. Please let us know about your employee considerations
 - ☐ How many full time employee positions may be lost as a result of economic impact related to COVID-19? _____
 - ☐ How many hours of unpaid employee furloughs (e.g. they have been unable to continue to work during the pandemic, unable to do work remotely, etc.) have been accumulated? _____
 - ☐ How many hours have been used by employees for sick leave, annual leave, or paid time off (PTO) related to COVID-19? _____
 - ☐ How much has been spent on employees who qualify for EPSLA or other benefit (specify)? _____
 - ☐ Amount spend on paid leave related to your organization's COVID policy (e.g. week-off portion of week-on/week-off work schedules) _____

- Describe changes in employment practices (e.g. support for early retirement, leaving vacant positions unfilled) as a result of COVID-19.

Utility Customer Assistance (new Section)

26. Does your utility offer an energy rate or fixed charge discount to low-income customers?

- If yes to question 28 please answer the following questions.

- Number of customers receiving the discount _____

- What is the dollar amount value of the discount provided _____

- What is the dollar amount received from third parties for the discount _____

- Have you stopped funding 'optional' programs such as weatherization, rebates, etc.?

- Is your organization concerned you will have to reduce the amount of funding available to low-income programs because of reduced revenue?

- If yes, will this affect your organizations 3rd party contracts and relationships?

27. Provide the estimated amount of funds that your organization has spent on energy assistance programs, both in utility programs and as money passed through to third party programs from March 1 – June 30, 2020? _____

28. How much does your utility receive from state and federal programs (LIHEAP, WAP, Commerce) _____

29. Describe other actions your organization does for customers who need assistance (both direct and indirect) with their utility bills.

Impacts to Pending Projects (new section)

30. List any infrastructure projects that could go to construction in the next two years. If you have more than four projects please send a list to wa.energyem@commerce.wa.gov

31. List any projects that are supported by the Washington State Clean Energy Fund (CEF). This could be RD&D, Grid Modernization, or other funding streams. If you have more than four projects please send a list to wa.energyem@commerce.wa.gov

32. As your organization evaluates the financial impact of this pandemic, please rank your top four priorities.

Options are the following:

- Staffing health and safety
- Financial health of utility
- Revenue loss as a result of increasing use of customer financial assistance
- Capital improvement financial (public and private access to funding)
- Declining rate based on revenue from late or non-payments
- Declining rate based revue from reduced demand/load
- Economic impacts on customers (commercial and industrial)
- Economic impacts on customers (residential)
- Availability of repair parts or equipment.

33. Based on your priorities, how can the state best support you and your customers?