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PRESS STATEMENT

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Governor Holcomb: Extend Winter Disconnect Moratorium AND Order Statewide Moratorium on all Utility Disconnects

INDIANAPOLIS -- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Citizens Action Coalition and the Indiana Community Action Association are calling on Governor Holcomb to not only extend Indiana's Winter Disconnect Moratorium,[1] which officially ended yesterday, but also to put in place a statewide moratorium on any and all utility disconnects until this crisis passes.

In Indiana, about a third of Hoosiers struggle to meet their basic needs. Community Action Agencies across the state see this every day as they provide services to low-income families, such as Weatherization Assistance and LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program). Citizens Action Coalition hears from hundreds of Hoosiers every week who struggle to pay their utility bills.

This aligns with data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration,[2] which found in 2015 that nearly one in three Midwesterners experienced household energy insecurity and nearly one in five reported "reducing or foregoing food or medicine in order to pay for energy bills."

"As more and more Hoosiers, most especially children, are being asked to stay home, the need to ensure that every household in Indiana has access to essential utility services is a must," said Kerwin Olson, Executive Director of CAC.

Furthermore, low-income households will bear the economic brunt of this crisis. Three of the five largest occupations in Indiana are in the service sector and pay less than \$11.00 per hour. According to the 2018 Occupational Employment statistics data, nearly 36% of Hoosier jobs pay less than \$15.00 per hour.

"Many service sector employees do not have access to paid sick time and many in the service sector cannot work from home, meaning that they will very likely end up without a paycheck as this pandemic carries on," says Ed Gerardot, Executive Director of INCAA.

Utility service is crucial to our modern lives. We are grateful to NIPSCO, Duke Energy, Indiana-American, Citizens Energy Group, and others for voluntarily suspending disconnections. "We must also be mindful of those households who may currently be

without service, including water. We applaud Citizens and Indiana-American for their commitment to restore service to those lacking access and encourage the other utilities to follow their lead," added Mr. Olson.

However, it is critical to ensure that none of our vulnerable citizens are left out of this protection. We respectfully ask Governor Holcomb to ACT NOW to not only extend the disconnect moratorium, but also enact a statewide moratorium and protect all Hoosiers from utility disconnects.

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About Citizens Action Coalition (CAC)

CAC has advocated for four decades on behalf of Hoosiers on issues regarding energy policy, utility reform, health care, pollution prevention, and family farms. In order to achieve the objective to protect consumers in Indiana, CAC's activities include performing research, carrying out public education campaigns, organizing citizens, creating public awareness, lobbying legislators, intervening in utility cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission, and litigating when necessary. CAC's mission is to initiate, facilitate and coordinate citizen action directed to improving the quality of life of all inhabitants of the State of Indiana through principled advocacy of public policies to preserve democracy, conserve natural resources, protect the environment, and provide affordable access to essential human services.

About the Indiana Community Action Association

The Indiana Community Action Association, Inc. (IN-CAA) is a statewide not-for-profit membership corporation, incorporated in the State of Indiana in 1970. IN-CAA's members or Network is comprised of Indiana's 22 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which serve all of Indiana's 92 counties. IN-CAA envisions a state with limited or no poverty, where its residents have decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions, and where resources are available to help low-income individuals attain self-sufficiency. IN-CAA serves as an advocate and facilitator of policy, planning and programs to create solutions and share responsibility as leaders in the war against poverty. Therefore, it is IN-CAA's mission is to help the state's Community Action Agencies address the conditions of poverty through training and technical assistance; developing models for service delivery; and providing resources to help increase Network capacity. The functions of IN-CAA include dissemination of information throughout the Indiana Community Action Network, the delivery of services in areas where local operators have not been available, the development of training programs that are seen as viable, implementation of practices that are best delivered by a central agency, and other functions that are agreed upon by the Board of Directors.

[1] <https://www.in.gov/oucc/2655.htm>

[2] Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Office of Energy Consumption and Efficiency Statistics, Forms EIA-457A and EIA-457C of the 2015 Residential Energy Consumption Survey.