

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF MARYLAND**

**UTILITY SERVICE PROTECTION PROGRAM**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**WINTER 2020-2021**

Submitted to the  
Maryland General Assembly  
Annapolis, Maryland

in compliance with § 7-307 of  
Public Utilities Article,  
*Annotated Code of Maryland*

William Donald Schaefer Tower  
6 Saint Paul Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
[www.psc.state.md.us](http://www.psc.state.md.us)

## Table of Contents

<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>PROGRAM PARTICIPATION .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTAL ARREARAGES.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PARTICIPANT ARREARAGES AND PROGRAM COMPLIANCE .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>HEATING SEASON TERMINATIONS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>HIGH ENERGY CONSUMPTION .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>PRIMARY HEAT SOURCE .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>MEAP GRANTS .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>APPENDIX A1 2020-2021 HEATING SEASON REPORTING UTILITIES BASIC INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>ATTACHMENT 1 MOTION ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION (PC53).....</b>	<b>39</b>

**LIST OF TABLES**

E 1 2020-2021 USPP PARTICIPATION INFORMATION BY UTILITY.....	3
E 2 2020-2021 USPP TERMINATION BY UTILITY .....	5
E 3 USPP PARTICIPATION AND SERVICE TERMINATION .....	6
TABLE 1 NUMBER OF USPP CUSTOMERS AND ELIGIBLE NON-PARTICIPATING CUSTOMERS BY POVERTY LEVEL.....	12
TABLE 2 USPP PARTICIPATION AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL ELIGIBLE FOR EACH POVERTY LEVEL FOR EACH OF THE LAST TWO HEATING SEASONS .....	15
TABLE 3 USPP PARTICIPANTS AND PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLMENT TO MEAP AND TOTAL CUSTOMERS.....	16
TABLE 4 PERCENTAGE OF 2020-2021 USPP PARTICIPANTS WHO ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM DURING THE PRIOR HEATING SEASON.....	17
TABLE 5 PERCENTAGE OF USPP CUSTOMERS MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS, THE AVERAGE DOLLAR AMOUNT OF THOSE PAYMENTS, AND THE AVERAGE ARREARAGE REQUIRING PAYMENTS BY POVERTY LEVEL.....	20
TABLE 6 PERCENTAGE OF USPP PARTICIPANTS, MEAP-ELIGIBLE CUSTOMERS, BY POVERTY LEVEL, AND NON-MEAP CUSTOMERS IN ARREARS .....	24
TABLE 7 ARREARAGE FOR USPP PARTICIPANTS, MEAP-CERTIFIED NON-USPP PARTICIPANTS, AND NON-MEAP CUSTOMERS IN ARREARS BY POVERTY LEVEL' .....	26
TABLE 8 PERCENTAGE OF USPP PARTICIPANTS WHO COMPLIED WITH PROGRAM PAYMENT PROVISIONS BY POVERTY LEVEL DURING THE LAST TWO HEATING SEASONS.....	29
TABLE 9 NUMBER OF WINTER HEATING SEASON TERMINATIONS .....	30
TABLE 10 PERCENTAGE OF USPP PARTICIPANTS WHO CONSUMED MORE THAN 135% OF SYSTEM AVERAGE ENERGY DURING THE MOST RECENT HEATING SEASON.....	32
TABLE 11 PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS, MEAP-CERTIFIED NON-USPP PARTICIPANTS, AND NON-MEAP CUSTOMERS WHOSE PRIMARY HEAT SOURCE IS PROVIDED BY THE UTILITY BY POVERTY LEVEL.....	34
TABLE 12 AVERAGE MARYLAND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT FOR USPP PARTICIPANTS BY POVERTY LEVEL FOR THE LAST TWO HEATING SEASONS.....	36

**LIST OF FIGURES**

FIGURE 1 USPP PARTICIPANTS BY HEATING SEASON ..... 2

FIGURE 2 USPP TERMINATION RATE BY HEATING SEASON ..... 6

FIGURE 3 USPP AVERAGE SUPPLEMENTAL ARREARAGE BY POVERTY LEVEL  
IN THREE CONSECUTIVE WINTER SEASONS ..... 7

FIGURE 4 USPP PARTICIPATION COMPARISON BY POVERTY LEVEL FOR TWO-  
CONSECUTIVE HEATING SEASONS ..... 13

FIGURE 5 USPP CUSTOMERS ENROLLED IN TWO-CONSECUTIVE HEATING  
SEASONS BY UTILITY ..... 18

FIGURE 6 STATEWIDE RATE OF USPP CUSTOMERS ENROLLED IN TWO-  
CONSECUTIVE HEATING SEASONS ..... 18

FIGURE 7 AVERAGE MONTHLY SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENT BY USPP  
PARTICIPANTS BY POVERTY LEVEL FOR 2018-2019, 2019-2020, AND 2020-2021 22

FIGURE 8 AVERAGE SUPPLEMENTAL ARREARAGE BY POVERTY LEVEL FOR  
2018-2019, 2019-2020, AND 2020-2021 ..... 23

FIGURE 9 USPP ARREARAGE BY POVERTY LEVEL FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE  
HEATING SEASONS ..... 27

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 2020-2021 winter heating season was not a normal heating season due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data by the reporting utilities provided evidence of the COVID-19 impact on customers of the Utility Service Protection Program (“USPP” or “Program”) when compared to the previous heating season. Four subsidiaries of the Chesapeake Utilities Corporation (“CUC”), CUC-Cambridge Gas Division (“CUC-Cambridge”), CUC-Citizen Gas Division (“CUC-Citizen”), CUC-Sandpiper Energy (“CUC-Sandpiper”), and Elkton Gas (“Elkton”) did not provide USPP data since the CUC implemented a policy that there would be no termination during the 2020-2021 heating season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the 2020-2021 winter heating season, 16,635 customers participated in USPP, a customer enrollment decrease of 6,680, or approximately 29 percent, from the 23,316 USPP participants in the 2019-2020 heating season, a much larger percentage decrease than the reported 17 percent decrease from the 2018-2019 to the 2019-2020 heating season<sup>1</sup>. In the 2020-2021 winter heating season, USPP participants decreased by 68,191 as compared with the highest enrollment of 84,826 USPP participants in the 2010-2011 winter season. The number of participants in the 2020-2021 winter season was the lowest since the 2010-2011 winter season as shown in Figure 1 below. Six utilities reported a total decrease by 9,741 from the 2019-2020 USPP participants<sup>2</sup>. Three utilities reported a total increase of 3,061 USPP participants from the previous heating season.<sup>3</sup> Thus the net decrease of USPP participants is 6,680 in the 2020-2021 heating season from the previous heating season.

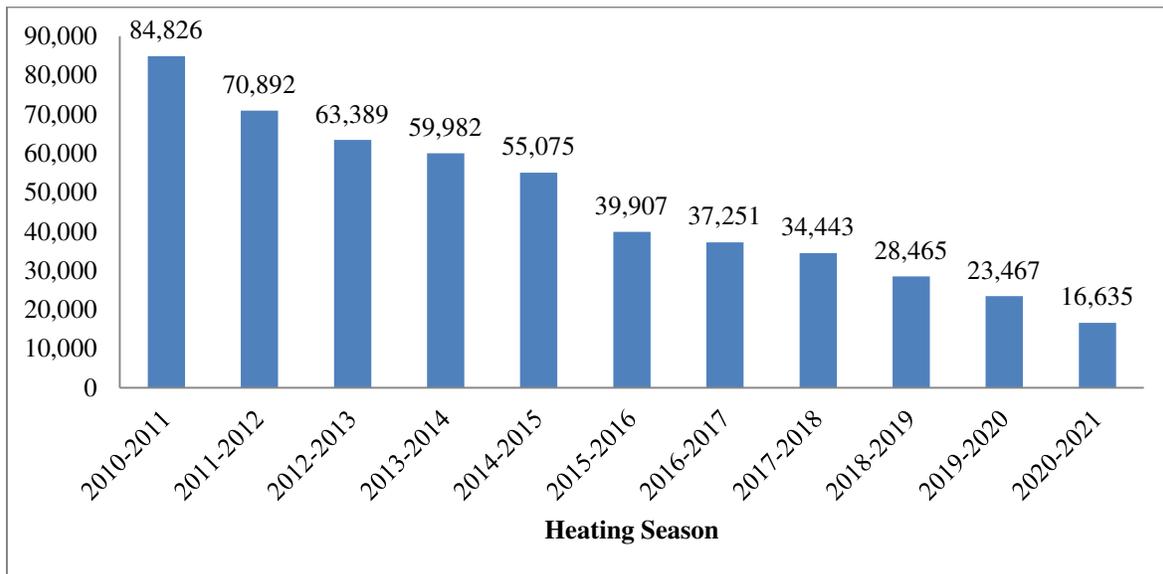
---

<sup>1</sup> The numbers represent the comparable between two consecutive heating seasons (2019-2020 and 2020-2021), excluding Choptank Electric Cooperative since Choptank is no longer subject to COMAR 20.31.05.09. Hereafter, the statewide comparison will exclude Choptank between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 heating season, otherwise where noted. For comparison with the 2019-2020 USPP Report, the numbers will differ due to the omission of Choptank in this year’s report.

<sup>2</sup> Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (“BGE”), Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc. (“Columbia Gas” or “CGM”), Potomac Electric Power Company (“Pepco”), Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc. (“SMECO”), The Potomac Edison Company (“PE”), and Washington Gas Light Company (“WGL”) reported a decrease in USPP enrollment.

<sup>3</sup> Delmarva Power & Light Company (“Delmarva” or “DPL”), Easton Utilities (“Easton”), and Mayor & Council of Berlin (“Berlin”) reported an increase in USPP participants.

**Figure 1 USPP Participants by Heating Season**



The USPP enrollment rate in the latest winter season represented 49 percent of the 33,864 customers statewide who are certified to receive benefits from the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (“MEAP”), 15 percentage points lower than the 64 percent observed during the previous winter season. This enrollment rate as a percentage of MEAP-certified customers is a result of a decrease in both the number of USPP participants and the number of MEAP-certified residential customers participating in the USPP during the 2020-2021 winter season. Table E1 provides each utility’s USPP participants, MEAP-certified customers, and USPP enrollment as a percentage of MEAP and total residential customers the utility serves. Of the utilities listed, Delmarva, with approximately 84 percent, had the highest USPP enrollment rate among MEAP customers, followed by BGE with 83 percent, Berlin with 68 percent, and CGM with 50 percent of the enrollment rate. The rest of the utilities had an enrollment rate of below 32 percent. WGL had a six percent USPP enrollment rate, which was the lowest enrollment rate. All reporting utilities had a lower enrollment rate than that in the 2019-2020 report except for CGM whose enrollment rate remained unchanged.

**E 1 2020-2021 USPP PARTICIPATION INFORMATION BY UTILITY<sup>4</sup>**

UTILITY	USPP	MEAP Customers	USPP Enrollment as % of MEAP	Total Customers	USPP Enrollment as % of Total Customers
<b>Baltimore Gas and Electric Company</b>	6,823	8,212	83.09%	1,831,837	0.37%
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,524	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	9,173	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	10,000	N/A
<b>Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.</b>	752	1,504	50.00%	30,465	2.47%
<b>Delmarva Power &amp; Light Company</b>	5,603	6,632	84.48%	184,475	3.04%
<b>Easton Utilities Commission</b>	122	601	20.30%	8,510	1.43%
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	537	N/A
<b>Mayor and Council of Berlin</b>	229	336	68.15%	2,447	9.36%
<b>Potomac Electric Power Company</b>	673	4,711	14.29%	538,412	0.12%
<b>Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b>	1,615	5,124	31.52%	150,520	1.07%
<b>The Potomac Edison Company</b>	517	2,068	25.00%	231,948	0.22%
<b>Washington Gas Light Company</b>	301	4,676	6.44%	479,822	0.06%
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	<b>16,635</b>	<b>33,864</b>	<b>49.12%</b>	<b>3,480,670</b>	<b>0.48%</b>

As seen in the last column of Table E1, the USPP participants accounted for approximately 0.48% of the total customer base that the USPP participating utilities serve, lower than the 0.68% observed in the last USPP report. The USPP enrollment rate for each utility ranged from less than one percent to 9.36 percent of the utility’s respective total residential customers.

The primary purpose of the USPP is to minimize service terminations of low income customers during the heating season. Table E2 provides the termination number and termination rate of the USPP participants for each utility in the 2020-2021 winter heating season. The number of USPP participants’ services terminated was 86, a decrease of 1,317 or 94 percent from 1,403 in the preceding heating season. The statewide USPP termination rate was

---

<sup>4</sup> Note: The four Chesapeake Utilities entities did not report USPP data but did report the data for the MEAP non-USPP participants, so the calculation for this table with their data were treated as not applicable.

approximately 0.52 percent, compared to 6.1 percent in the 2019-2020 heating season. The low USPP customer termination rate is the direct result of the Commission's August 31, 2020 ruling and subsequent September 22, 2020 order, imposing a moratorium on customer disconnections in response to COVID-19.<sup>5</sup> The Commission's orders directed a moratorium on terminations until November 15, 2020, and required that the utilities send termination notices to customers at least 45 days in advance (an extension from the current 14 days), but no earlier than October 1, 2020. These actions included but were not limited to USPP customers.

Table E2 indicates that service terminations of USPP customers were reported by only three utilities: DPL reported 50, BGE reported 30, and Pepco reported six terminations compared with 123, 1,214, and 52 terminations reported in the 2019-2020 winter season, respectively. BGE represented the largest number of customer disconnections in the previous reports but dropped by 1,184 disconnections during the pandemic, attributing the change in termination numbers to the Commission's moratorium orders. Ten utilities did not report any terminations in the 2020-2021 winter season. As in the previous heating seasons, CGM and WGL each observed a no-termination policy. Some small and municipal utilities normally report no terminations and work with their customers to avoid termination. Two utilities, SMECO and PE, reported terminations in the 2019-2020 heating season but did not report terminations in this latest heating season.

---

<sup>5</sup> The Commission initiated *PC53: Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Maryland's Gas and Electric Utility Operations and Customer Experiences* and, in emergency action, issued five motions from the bench on August 31, 2020, see Attachment 1.

**E 2 2020-2021 USPP TERMINATION BY UTILITY<sup>6</sup>**

<b>UTILITY</b>	<b>USPP Participants</b>	<b>Terminations</b>	<b>Termination Rate</b>	<b>Change in Terminations from Previous Heating Season</b>
<b>Baltimore Gas and Electric Company</b>	6,823	30	0.44%	-1,184
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.</b>	752	0	0.00%	0
<b>Delmarva Power &amp; Light Company</b>	5,603	50	0.89%	-73
<b>Easton Utilities Commission</b>	122	0	0.00%	-6
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Mayor &amp; Council of Berlin</b>	229	0	0.00%	0
<b>Potomac Electric Power Company</b>	673	6	0.89%	-46
<b>Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b>	1,615	0	0.00%	0
<b>The Potomac Edison Company</b>	517	0	0.00%	-8
<b>Washington Gas Light Company</b>	301	0	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,635</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>0.52%</b>	<b>-1,317</b>

Table E3 summarizes the number of USPP participants as shown in Figure 1 above and USPP terminations for the 11 winter seasons from 2010-2011 to 2020-2021. The number of USPP participants was downward-trending during this time period, decreasing from 84,826 in the 2010-2011 winter season to 16,635 in the 2020-2021 heating season, a reduction of approximately 80 percent. The number of USPP terminations previously also showed a declining trend from the 2012-2013 to the 2019-2020 heating season; however, the largest decrease in terminations in the 2020-2021 winter season from the previous reported 1,403 in the 2019-2020 period represents an anomaly for the reason discussed earlier in this report.<sup>7</sup> The statewide termination rate among USPP participants was 0.52 percent in 2020-2021 compared to 6.1 percent in the 2019-2020 winter season. As shown by a trend line in Figure 2, there is a

<sup>6</sup> The 2020-2021 winter heating season covered November 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021 and the COVID-19 moratorium on termination notices ended October 1, 2020. The earliest termination notices could be sent out to customers was November 15, 2020.

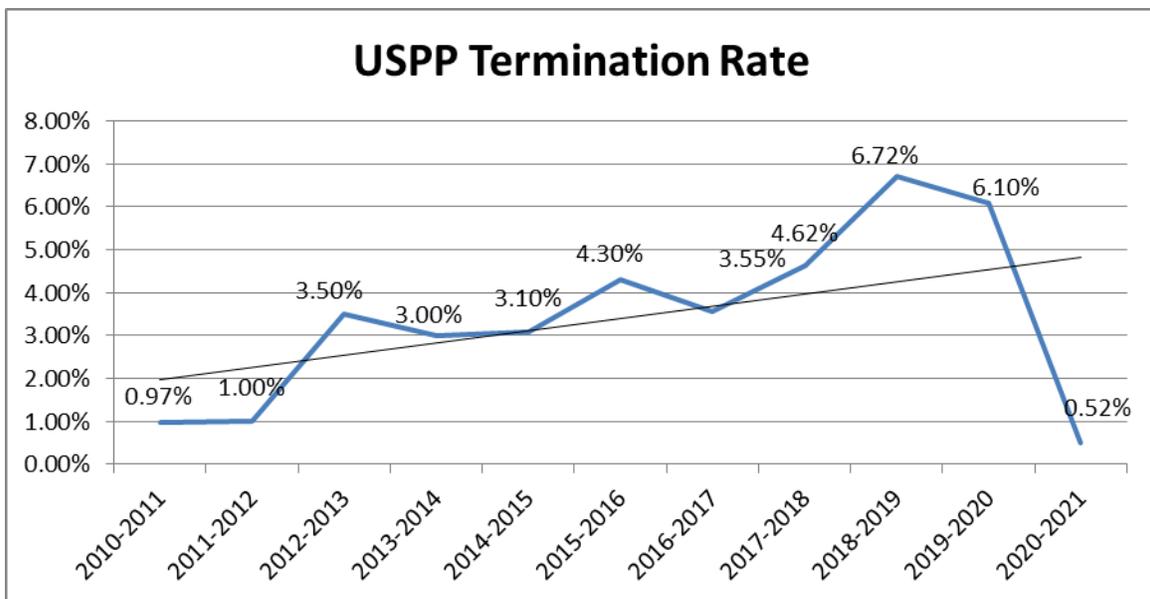
<sup>7</sup> This excluded 39 terminations by Choptank in the 2019-2020 winter season. The exclusion was for comparison purposes since Choptank is no longer required to offer USPP.

tendency for an upward termination rate. The 2020-2021 termination rate was an outlier and far below the trend line due to the utilities' response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### E 3 USPP Participation and Service Termination<sup>8</sup>

Reporting Season	USPP Participants	USPP Service Terminations	Percentage of USPP Terminations
2010-2011	84,826	819	0.97%
2011-2012	7,0892	708	1.00%
2012-2013	63,389	2,208	3.50%
2013-2014	59,982	1,788	3.00%
2014-2015	55,075	1,721	3.10%
2015-2016	39,907	1,718	4.30%
2016-2017	37,251	1,323	3.55%
2017-2018	34,443	1,592	4.62%
2018-2019	28,465	1,913	6.72%
2019-2020	23,647	1,442	6.10%
2020-2021	16,635	86	0.52%

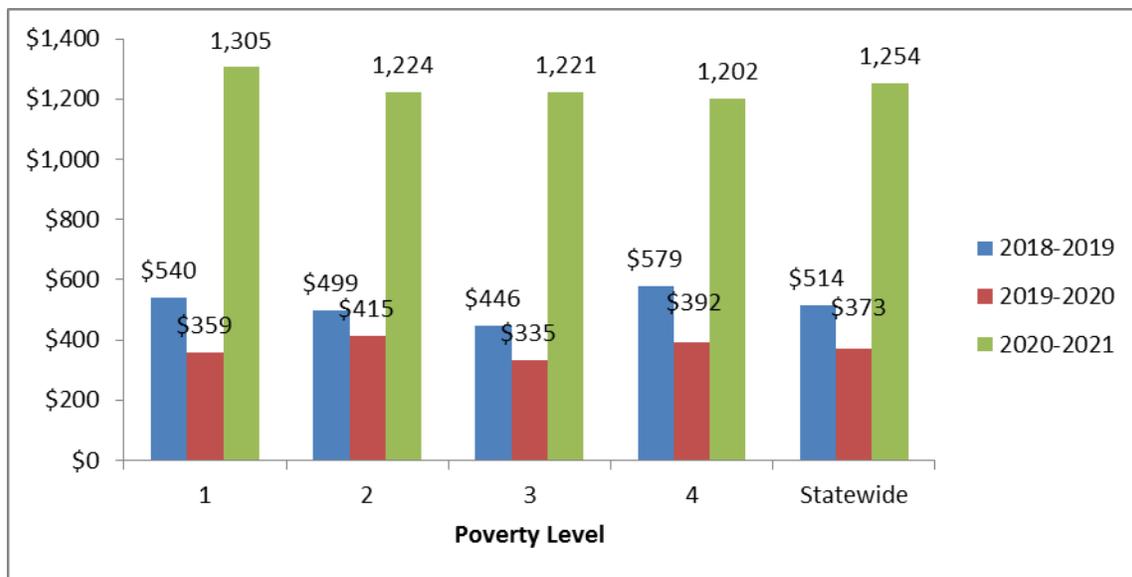
Figure 2 USPP Termination Rate by Heating Season



<sup>8</sup> The analyses did not include the Poverty Level 5 data submitted by BGE, DPL, and Pepco since 2015-2016.

Another observation is that the statewide average supplemental arrearage skyrocketed in the latest winter season. During the 2020-2021 heating season, the statewide average supplemental arrearage was \$1,254, increasing by \$881 or 236 percent from \$373 in 2019-2020. In the 2019-2020 USPP Report, the statewide average supplemental arrearage decreased from \$514 in 2018-2019 to \$373 in 2019-2020. A reasonable explanation is that the utilities arranged more payment plans than in the previous winter; however, the unpaid balance increased due to the deferral of supplemental arrearages under the mandatory moratorium on disconnection. The COVID-19 pandemic had considerably affected USPP customers' supplemental arrearage for the latest heating season. Figure 3 shows the average supplemental arrearage statewide and at each of the poverty levels in three consecutive reports.

**Figure 3 USPP Average Supplemental Arrearage by Poverty Level in Three Consecutive Winter Seasons**



## **BACKGROUND**

On March 1, 1988, the Public Service Commission of Maryland (“Commission”) issued Order No. 67999 in Case No. 8091,<sup>9</sup> which established the Utility Service Protection Program, as required by Article 78 §54K, which has since been recodified as §7-307 of the Public Utilities Article (“PUA”), *Annotated Code of Maryland*. PUA §7-307 directed the Commission to promulgate regulations relating to when, and under what conditions, there should be a prohibition against or a limitation upon the authority of a public service company to terminate, for nonpayment, gas or electric service to low-income residential customers during the winter heating season. Regulations governing the USPP are contained in Section 20.31.05 of the Code of Maryland Regulations (“COMAR”).

The USPP is available to utility customers who are eligible and have applied for a grant from the Maryland Energy Assistance Program, which is administered by the Office of Home Energy Programs (“OHEP”), a division of the Maryland Department of Human Services. The USPP is designed to protect eligible low-income residential customers from utility service termination during the winter heating season, which extends from November 1 through March 31. The USPP is intended to help low-income customers avoid the accumulation of arrearages, which could lead to service terminations, by requiring timely equal monthly utility payments—also known as budget billing plans—based on the estimated cost of annual service to participating households.<sup>10</sup> The USPP allows customers in arrears to restore service by accepting an equal payment plan and by requiring that any outstanding arrearages be lowered to no more than \$400 prior to the beginning of the winter heating season. To reduce those arrearages, the USPP encourages the utility to establish a supplemental monthly payment plan for customers with outstanding balances. Maryland’s gas and electric utilities are required to publicize and offer the USPP prior to November of each year. *See* COMAR 20.31.05.03C.

---

<sup>9</sup> *In the Matter of Regulations Governing Terminations of Gas or Electric Service to Low Income Residential Customers during the Heating Season.*

<sup>10</sup> Through Rulemaking 73, the Commission adopted a change to COMAR that removed the mandatory budget billing requirement for first time USPP customers.

PUA §7-307 requires the Commission to submit an annual report to the General Assembly addressing terminations of service during the previous winter heating season. To facilitate the compilation of this report, the Commission directs all gas and electric utilities to collect specific data under COMAR 20.31.05.09. Through a data request issued by Commission Staff, the utilities are asked to report the following: (1) the number of USPP participants, USPP eligible non-participants among MEAP certified customers, total utility customers, and current participants who also participated in the previous year; (2) the number of customers for whom the utility's service is the primary heating source; (3) the number of customers making supplemental payments, average supplemental payment amounts, and the amount of arrearage leading to those payments; (4) the number of USPP participating and eligible non-participating customers in arrears, the amount of the arrearage, and the amount of the average monthly payment obligations; (5) the average MEAP grant amount; (6) the number of customers dropped from the USPP for non-payment of bills; (7) the number of service terminations for USPP participants; (8) the number of USPP customers consuming more than 135 percent of the system average for the heating season; and (9) the average cost of actual usage for the heating season.<sup>11</sup> Utilities serving residential customers in Maryland submitted data for this report. The Commission's May 2019 data request for the 2018-2019 heating season was similar to the previous USPP data requests.<sup>12</sup> This report provides an analysis and summary of that information.

## **DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Seventeen companies submitted 2020-2021 heating season USPP reports to the Commission.<sup>13</sup> Among these companies, four companies did not participate in the USPP: Hagerstown does not participate in the USPP but implements a Commission-approved alternate

---

<sup>11</sup> The data request was issued to BGE, CUC-Cambridge, CUC-Citizens, CUC-Sandpiper, CGM, DPL, Easton, Elkton, WGL, Hagerstown Municipal Electric Light Plant ("Hagerstown"), Berlin, PE, Pepco, SMECO, Thurmont Municipal Light Company ("Thurmont"), UGI Utilities, Inc. ("UGI"), and Williamsport Municipal Light Plant ("Williamsport").

<sup>12</sup> The USPP Data Request was expanded in 2007 and several small changes were made in 2018 in the interests of clarity.

<sup>13</sup> Eighteen utilities reported in 2019-2020. Choptank is no longer subject to COMAR 20.31.05.09 and did not provide data responses for the most recent heating season.

program;<sup>14</sup> two small municipal companies—Thurmont and Williamsport—and UGI reported that they did not participate in the USPP and are not included in this report.<sup>15</sup> The analysis contained in this report includes 13 companies that provided USPP poverty level data; however, the data provided to the Commission by these companies have variations. For example, some utilities indicated that the data were not available by poverty level due to accounting system limitations or was unavailable for various other reasons. In addition, the four subsidiaries of Chesapeake Utilities Corporation—CUC-Cambridge, CUC-Citizen, CUC-Sandpiper, and Elkton—did not report USPP data due to the corporate policy to not disconnect customers during the pandemic winter season. For consistency with previous reports, these four utilities are included in this report. The data analyses in this report were performed based on the available data of the 13 companies for the 2020-2021 heating season. The basic information for all responding utilities is contained in Appendix A1.

The data in this report provides information on Poverty Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 ("PL1, PL2, PL3, and PL4") grouped by household incomes measured against the federal poverty level ("FPL") guidelines as follows:

**Poverty Level Classification**

<b>Poverty Level</b>	<b>Household Income</b>
Poverty Level 1	0%-75% of the FPL
Poverty Level 2	>75%-110% of the FPL
Poverty Level 3	>110%-150% of the FPL
Poverty Level 4	>150%-175% of the FPL

Each USPP customer's poverty level is determined by the Office of Home Energy Programs ("OHEP") after OHEP receives the customer's MEAP application. OHEP provides the list of customer poverty levels to each utility which serves the approved MEAP customers. A special note regarding the treatment of Poverty Level 5 in this report is required. Poverty Level 5 data previously was reported only by Baltimore Gas and Electric Company; however,

---

<sup>14</sup> Pursuant to COMAR 20.31.05.01C, Hagerstown operates an approved alternative program that allows MEAP-eligible customers to receive USPP-type assistance as needed during the heating season. As such, Hagerstown does not distinguish between USPP participants and all MEAP-eligible customers and does not maintain records indicating the number of individual customers who received assistance beyond that provided under MEAP.

<sup>15</sup> UGI is a Pennsylvania based-company that offers limited service in Maryland.

since the 2015-2016 reporting season, DPL and Pepco also have provided data for Poverty Level 5.<sup>16</sup> Poverty Level 5 data is comprised of participants that receive subsidized housing allowances. Because residents of subsidized housing receive an allowance to defray the cost of utilities, these participants receive a separate and lower MEAP benefit than other USPP participants.<sup>17</sup> Staff did not include Poverty Level 5 data as a separate poverty level in the instant USPP report because these customers are not necessarily comparable. The report presents an analysis of the USPP data provided by the utilities in the order of the tables. The analysis focuses on the changes by utilities and poverty levels between the current winter reporting season and the previous heating season and also includes some trend analyses.

### **PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**

Table 1 shows the number of USPP participants and USPP eligible non-participants for each utility by poverty level in the 2020-2021 heating season.<sup>18</sup> The number of USPP participants was 16,635 with MEAP-certified non-USPP participants of 17,354, resulting in a total number of MEAP-certified customers of 33,989. The number of USPP participants decreased by 6,680 or approximately 29 percent; the MEAP-certified non-USPP customers increased by 5,227 or 43 percent; and the total number of MEAP-certified customers decreased by 1,454 or 4 percent, when compared to the previous heating season.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> DPL and Pepco started reporting Poverty Level 5 as did BGE after those companies merged with Exelon Corporation.

<sup>17</sup> Energy assistance is available to residents of subsidized housing who are directly responsible for paying their own heating costs and who meet all other eligibility criteria for the MEAP.

<sup>18</sup> The USPP participants are a subset of MEAP certified customers. Another subset of MEAP certified customers are non-USPP participants. The terms “USPP eligible non-Participant,” “MEAP eligible non-USPP Participant,” and “MEAP certified non-USPP customer” are used interchangeably in this report. These persons represent the customers who are eligible to receive a MEAP grant and are, therefore, eligible to enroll in USPP but who do not participate in USPP.

<sup>19</sup> The numbers in the table excluded Choptank for the two consecutive heating seasons.

**Table 1 NUMBER OF USPP CUSTOMERS AND ELIGIBLE NON-PARTICIPATING CUSTOMERS BY POVERTY LEVEL<sup>20</sup>**

UTILITY	USPP Participants					% of Statewide Total	USPP Eligible Non-Participants					Grand Total
	Poverty Level						Poverty Level					
	1	2	3	4	Overall		1	2	3	4	Overall	
<b>Baltimore Gas and Electric Company</b>	2,306	1,811	1,851	855	6,823	41.02%	525	317	355	192	1,389	8,212
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Columbia Gas of Maryland</b>	245	244	191	72	752	4.52%	255	260	276	86	877	1,629
<b>Delmarva Power &amp; Light Company</b>	1,908	1,814	1,403	478	5,603	33.68%	353	296	282	98	1,029	6,632
<b>Easton Utilities</b>	30	44	35	13	122	0.73%	133	157	142	47	479	601
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Mayor &amp; Council of Berlin</b>	84	71	53	21	229	1.38%	52	28	15	12	107	336
<b>Potomac Electric Power Company</b>	267	205	147	54	673	4.05%	1,801	1,021	839	377	4,038	4,711
<b>Southern Maryland Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.</b>	574	504	378	159	1,615	9.71%	1,214	1,011	879	405	3,509	5,124
<b>The Potomac Edison Company</b>	173	144	150	50	517	3.11%	500	427	434	190	1,551	2,068
<b>Washington Gas Light Company</b>	117	95	69	20	301	1.81%	1,782	1,087	1,069	437	4,375	4,676
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5,704</b>	<b>4,932</b>	<b>4,277</b>	<b>1,722</b>	<b>16,635</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>6,605</b>	<b>4,588</b>	<b>4,206</b>	<b>1,830</b>	<b>17,354</b>	<b>33,989</b>

<sup>20</sup> The four Chesapeake Utilities entities did not report USPP data but did report the data for the MEAP non-USPP participants, so the calculation for this table with their data were treated as not applicable.

Experience varied by utility during the 2020-2021 heating season. As aforementioned, Chesapeake Utilities' four utilities did not report any USPP data to protect the customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the remaining nine reporting utilities, six utilities—BGE, CGM, Pepco, SMECO, PE, and WGL—reported USPP enrollment decreases of 9,741 in total and three utilities—DPL, Easton, and Berlin—reported increases of 3,061 USPP participants in the 2020-2021 heating season as compared with the previous heating season. BGE reported the largest decrease in participants by 8,806 or approximately 54 percent, followed by WGL, which had a decrease of 481 participants, as compared with the previous heating season. Delmarva reported the largest increase in the current report as compared to the previous report of 2,957 participants. A net decrease of 6,680 USPP enrollments between the current and the previous heating season was reported. Figure 4 illustrates USPP Participation by poverty level for the two most recent heating seasons.

As for the distribution of statewide USPP participants, in the 2020-2021 winter season, BGE reported 6,823 USPP participants, accounting for 41 percent of the State's total USPP participants. In the 2019-2020 winter season, BGE reported 14,909 USPP participants and accounted for 63 percent of total statewide USPP participants. Since BGE is the largest utility in the State, its USPP participation accounts for the largest share in the State.

**Figure 4 USPP Participation Comparison by Poverty Level for Two-Consecutive Heating Seasons**

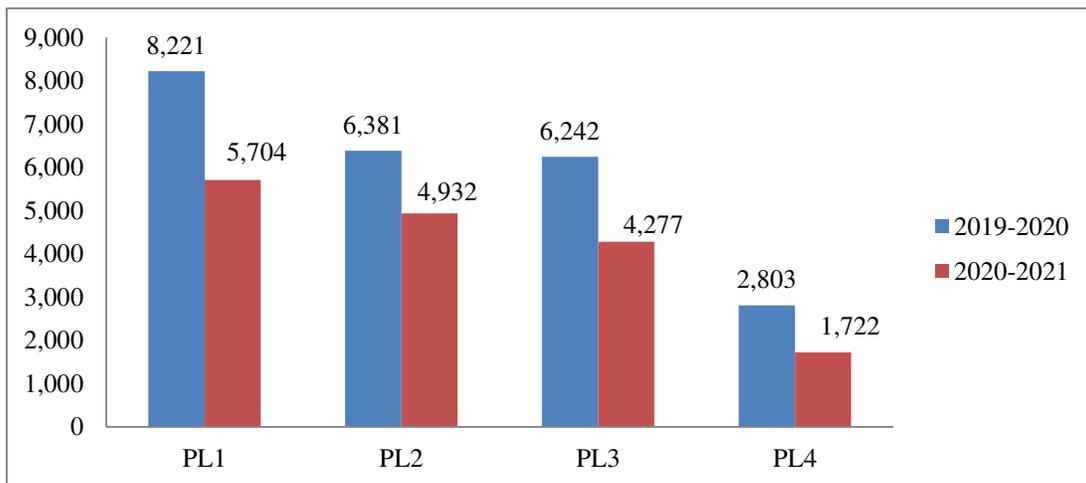


Table 2 presents USPP participation as a percentage of the total number of MEAP-certified customers for the 2020-2021 and 2019-2020 heating seasons by company and by poverty level. The statewide USPP participation rate of MEAP-certified customers for the 2020-2021 winter heating season was 49 percent, approximately 15 percentage points lower than the 64 percent observed in 2019-2020. This measure is normally an indicator of MEAP-certified customers who need energy assistance and also need USPP protection to spread unpaid balances over the winter season and beyond in order to avoid service termination. The USPP participation rate would be expected to be higher during the pandemic. However, the participation rate dropped by 15 percentage points during the pandemic heating season. This would ordinarily indicate that fewer MEAP customers would need to participate in the USPP. The analysis later in the report shows that there was a significant increase in the average supplemental arrearage for this heating season. One of the reasons for the lower participation rate is, as BGE explained, that customers might not be interested in applying for USPP participation since the moratorium policy was placed by the Commission.

The enrollment rate varied among the utilities. DPL reported the highest enrollment at 84 percent, followed by BGE with 83 percent among the MEAP-certified customers. However, in the previous reports, BGE reported the highest enrollment rate among its MEAP-certified customers above 90 percent since BGE serves the largest residential customer base in the State, serving a little over 53 percent of the total residential customers in the State. The pandemic changed the pattern of the USPP enrollment rates among the utilities. Berlin reported the same enrollment rate with 68 percent as in the previous heating season; Columbia Gas reported 46 percent; and SMECO had an enrollment rate of 32 percent in the 2020-2021 winter season. The remaining utilities each reported an enrollment rate below 30 percent. Comparing each utility's current enrollment rate to its previous winter season enrollment rate, seven utilities reported decreased enrollment rates. SMECO and WGL reported the largest drop in the enrollment rates, both decreased by 15 percentage points. One utility—Berlin—was unchanged and one utility—Easton—reported a nine-percentage-point increase in enrollment rate.

Observations among Poverty Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 present small variations ranging from 46 percent (Poverty Level 1) to 52 percent (Poverty Level 2). In the previous 2018-2019 and

2019-2020 heating seasons, the enrollment rates were all above 62 percent for all poverty levels. If compared to the 2019-2020 winter season's poverty levels, all poverty levels decreased by a range of 10 to 19 percentage points in the 2020-2021 heating season. Such large magnitudes of percentage decreases in this heating season may be due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the Commission's moratorium policy.

**Table 2 USPP PARTICIPATION AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL ELIGIBLE FOR EACH POVERTY LEVEL FOR EACH OF THE LAST TWO HEATING SEASONS<sup>21</sup>**

UTILITY	2020-2021 Participation					2019-2020 Participation				
	Poverty Level					Poverty Level				
	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall
Baltimore Gas and Electric Company	81%	85%	84%	82%	<b>83%</b>	92%	92%	93%	92%	92%
Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas	NA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	50%	50%	50%	50%	<b>50%</b>	57%	49%	48%	50%	51%
Delmarva Power & Light Company	84%	86%	83%	83%	<b>84%</b>	90%	88%	88%	90%	89%
Easton Utilities	18%	22%	20%	22%	<b>20%</b>	12%	12%	11%	11%	12%
Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	10%	11%	8%	13%	10%
Mayor & Council of Berlin	62%	72%	78%	64%	<b>68%</b>	61%	73%	72%	80%	68%
Potomac Electric Power Company	13%	17%	15%	13%	<b>14%</b>	26%	23%	24%	24%	24%
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.	32%	33%	30%	28%	<b>32%</b>	48%	46%	47%	47%	47%
The Potomac Edison Company	26%	25%	26%	21%	<b>25%</b>	35%	36%	34%	36%	35%
Washington Gas Light Company	6%	8%	6%	4%	<b>6%</b>	22%	20%	23%	21%	22%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>64%</b>

<sup>21</sup> N/A indicates either a company is not required to provide data or a company does not track data by poverty level. The four Chesapeake Utilities entities did not report USPP data but did report the data for the MEAP non-USPP participants, so the calculation for this table with their data were treated as not applicable. Choptank was excluded.

Table 3 presents the USPP enrollment compared to the total customers each utility serves. During the 2020-2021 heating season, the rate of USPP participants compared to total utility customers statewide was 0.48 percent and continued decreasing from the previously reported 0.68 percent in 2019-2020, 0.82 percent in 2018-2019, and one percent in 2017-2018. At the utility level, DPL reported 3.04 percent USPP participation rate (the highest USPP participation rate among major utilities except for municipal Berlin with 9.36 percent), followed by Columbia Gas with a 2.47 percent, and Easton and SMECO with a 1.43 and 1.07 percent participation rate, respectively. BGE, PE, Pepco, and WGL each had a USPP participation rate below one percent. The decreased statewide USPP enrollment rate of utilities' total residential customers was due to the decreased USPP participant enrollment rate with almost the same number of residential customers (decreased slightly by 1,089) in this winter season over the previous winter season.

**Table 3 USPP PARTICIPANTS AND PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLMENT TO MEAP AND TOTAL CUSTOMERS<sup>22</sup>**

UTILITY	USPP	MEAP Customers	USPP Participants as a Percentage of MEAP Customer	Total Customers	USPP Participants as a Percentage of Total Customers
Baltimore Gas and Electric Company	6,823	8,212	83%	1,831,837	0.37%
Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,524	N/A
Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division	N/A	N/A	N/A	9,173	N/A
Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy	N/A	N/A	N/A	10,000	N/A
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	752	1,504	50%	30,465	2.47%
Delmarva Power & Light Company	5,603	6,632	84%	184,475	3.04%
Easton Utilities	122	601	20%	8,510	1.43%
Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas	N/A	N/A	N/A	537	N/A
Mayor & Council of Berlin	229	336	68%	2,447	9.36%
Potomac Electric Power Company	673	4,711	14%	538,412	0.12%
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative	1,615	5,124	32%	150,520	1.07%
The Potomac Edison Company	517	2,068	25%	231,948	0.22%
Washington Gas Light Company	301	4,676	6%	479,822	0.06%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>16,635</b>	<b>33,864</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>3,480,670</b>	<b>0.48%</b>

<sup>22</sup> The four Chesapeake Utilities entities did not report USPP data but did report the data for the MEAP non-USPP participants, so the calculation for this table with their data were treated as not applicable.

Table 4 shows the percentage of customers who were USPP participants in the 2019-2020 heating season and also participated in the 2020-2021 heating season. Overall, 45 percent of the USPP customers who participated in the 2019-2020 heating season also enrolled in the USPP during the 2020-2021 heating season. This repeated enrollment rate in two consecutive heating seasons is 10 percentage points higher than the 35 percent noted in the previous report.

**Table 4 PERCENTAGE OF 2020-2021 USPP PARTICIPANTS WHO ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM DURING THE PRIOR HEATING SEASON<sup>23</sup>**

UTILITY	Poverty Level				
	1	2	3	4	Overall
<b>Baltimore Gas and Electric Company</b>	43%	51%	49%	42%	46%
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Delmarva Power &amp; Light Company</b>	51%	62%	60%	51%	57%
<b>Easton Utilities</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Mayor &amp; Council of Berlin</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Potomac Electric Power Company</b>	42%	42%	31%	39%	40%
<b>Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b>	40%	44%	48%	36%	43%
<b>The Potomac Edison Company</b>	24%	37%	31%	34%	31%
<b>Washington Gas Light Company</b>	17%	21%	19%	5%	18%
<b>TOTALS</b>	42%	49%	47%	41%	45%

Four utilities—BGE, DPL, Pepco, and SMECO—reported higher repeated enrollment rates than the previous heating season, ranging from three percentage points (SMECO) to 35 percentage points (DPL), higher than their previous reported percentages. PE and WGL reported lower repeated enrollment rates with two and 13 percentage points, respectively, lower for this winter season over the last winter season. CUC-Cambridge, CUC-Citizens, CUC-Sandpiper, CGM, Easton, Elkton, and Berlin did not report data since they do not track due to either the

<sup>23</sup> N/A indicates either a company is not required to provide data or a company does not track data by poverty level.

limitation of their accounting systems or are not required. Figure 5 provides a comparison for the utilities with reported data.

**Figure 5 USPP Customers Enrolled in Two-Consecutive Heating Seasons by Utility**

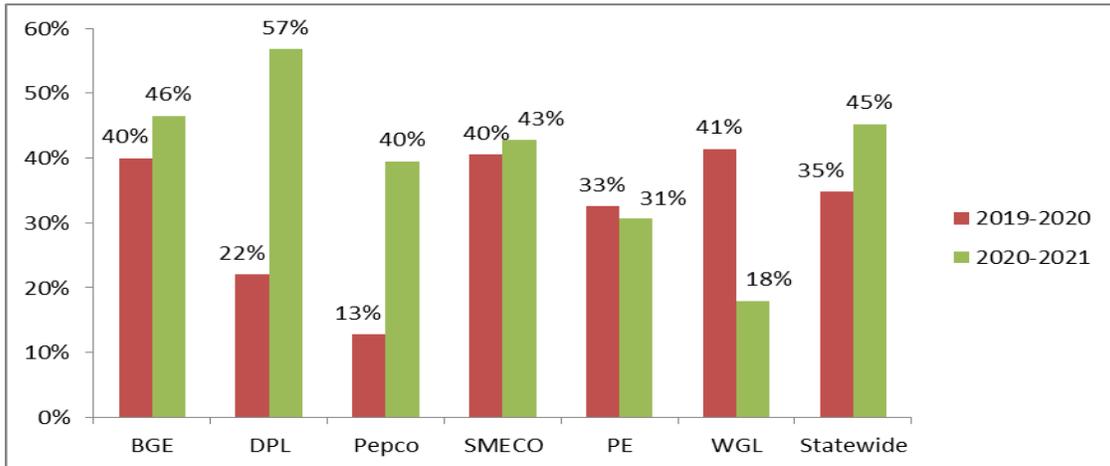
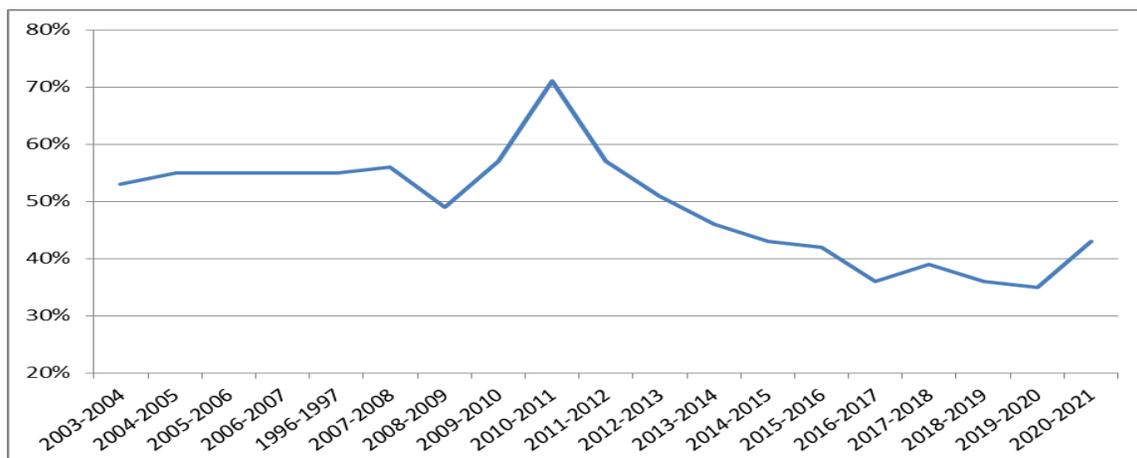


Figure 6 illustrates the repeat participations from the 2003-2004 heating season through the 2020-2021 winter season. The repetition rate of USPP participation increased beginning in 2003-2004, reached the peak in 2010-2011, and then declined and reached the lowest rate of repeat participants in 2019-2020. The repetition rate was up in the latest heating season.

**Figure 6 Statewide Rate of USPP Customers Enrolled in Two Consecutive Heating Seasons**



## **SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTAL ARREARAGES**

Table 5 shows the percentage of USPP participants making supplemental payments (also known as alternate payments), the average monthly amount of those payments, and the average “supplemental arrearage” that led to those payments. The USPP encourages the utilities to offer customers with outstanding arrearages the opportunity to place all or part of those arrearages in a special agreement to be paid off over an extended period of time. Although the deferred payment arrangements vary, all utilities provide for enrollment in supplemental payment plans. For example, BGE requires that all USPP participants enroll in a budget billing plan. Columbia Gas allows USPP customers to make 12-, 24-, and 36- months’ equal payment of existing arrearages according to their USPP customers’ incomes. Placing outstanding arrearages in special agreements allows customers to enroll in USPP and to be considered current in their utility payments as long as they continue to make their USPP equal monthly payments and their supplemental payments in a timely fashion. During the latest heating season, the Commission required the utilities to arrange customer payment plans for unpaid bills for a minimum plan period of 12 months, but 24 months for those customers receiving energy assistance from OHEP.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> The Commission initiated PC53: Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Maryland’s Gas and Electric Utility Operations and Customer Experiences and issued five motions from the bench on August 31, 2020, see Attachment 1.

**Table 5 PERCENTAGE OF USPP CUSTOMERS MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL PAYMENTS, THE AVERAGE DOLLAR AMOUNT OF THOSE PAYMENTS, AND THE AVERAGE ARREARAGE REQUIRING PAYMENTS BY POVERTY LEVEL<sup>25</sup>**

UTILITY	Percentage of USPP Customers Making Supplemental Payments					Average Monthly Amount of Supplemental Payments (\$)					Average Supplemental Arrearage (\$)				
	Poverty Level					Poverty Level					Poverty Level				
	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall
<b>Baltimore Gas and Electric Company</b>	9%	9%	8%	11%	<b>9%</b>	66	63	69	65	<b>66</b>	1,341	1,293	1,366	1,383	<b>1,342</b>
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.</b>	45%	39%	42%	39%	<b>42%</b>	14	15	15	20	<b>15</b>	287	320	263	370	<b>299</b>
<b>Delmarva Power &amp; Light Company</b>	34%	24%	24%	32%	<b>28%</b>	63	68	68	64	<b>66</b>	1,693	1,563	1,581	1,429	<b>1,608</b>
<b>Easton Utilities</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Mayor &amp; Council of Berlin</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Potomac Electric Power Company</b>	35%	28%	31%	44%	<b>33%</b>	57	63	50	56	<b>57</b>	1,424	1,185	1,009	979	<b>1,229</b>
<b>Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b>	26%	18%	16%	24%	<b>21%</b>	34	34	34	43	<b>35</b>	590	535	490	623	<b>561</b>
<b>The Potomac Edison Company</b>	24%	6%	9%	2%	<b>12%</b>	43	117	59	7	<b>55</b>	498	879	749	733	<b>602</b>
<b>Washington Gas Light Company</b>	14%	3%	10%	5%	<b>9%</b>	38	55	42	35	<b>41</b>	478	662	377	424	<b>470</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1,305</b>	<b>1,224</b>	<b>1,221</b>	<b>1,202</b>	<b>1,254</b>

<sup>25</sup> N/A indicates either a company is not required to provide data or a company does not track data by poverty level.

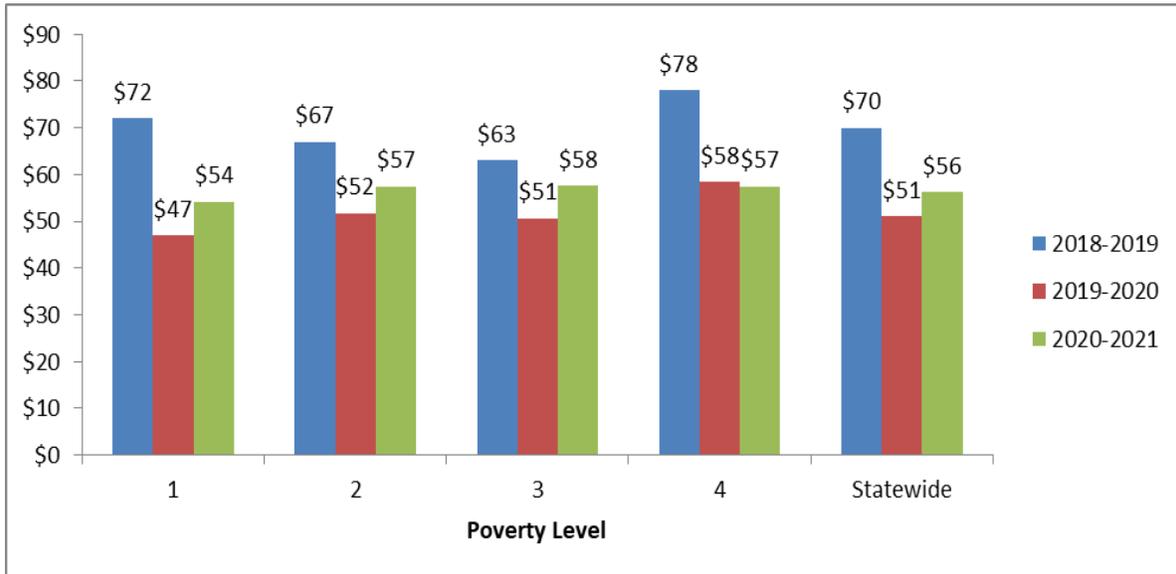
The four Chesapeake Utilities entities did not report USPP data but did report the data for the MEAP non-USPP participants, so for the calculation for this table with their data were treated as not applicable.

The number of customers who were participants in USPP and also made supplemental payments in the 2020-2021 heating season was 3,139, higher than the 1,769 in the 2019-2020 and 2,407 in the 2018-2019, but lower than the 3,673 customers in the 2017-2018 winter season. The percentage of USPP participants making supplemental payments was approximately 19 percent of total USPP participants, which was 12 percentage points higher than in the last reporting season. The amount of the average monthly supplemental payment during the 2020-2021 heating season statewide was \$56, which is slightly higher than the last year's \$51 but lower than the 2018-2019 winter's \$70.<sup>26</sup> As compared with the 2019-2020 season, a comparison by poverty level revealed that the average monthly supplemental payments increased slightly for all poverty levels except for Poverty Level 4. If compared with the 2018-2019 heating season, the average supplemental payments in the current report are lower than those in the 2018-2019 for all poverty levels. Thus, the average supplemental payments fluctuated year over year. However, such payments were managed in line with the previous heating season under the influence of COVID-19. This observation demonstrates that the USPP is a helpful tool for low-income customers, which may be due to the utilities that complied with the USPP requirement and the Commission's pandemic orders, and/or along with federal and State public policies. The supplemental payment comparison by poverty level for three consecutive heating seasons is demonstrated in Figure .

---

<sup>26</sup> This is a weighted average calculation for all poverty levels across all utilities weighted by the number of USPP participants who make supplemental payments.

**Figure 7 Average Monthly Supplemental Payment by USPP Participants by Poverty Level for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021**

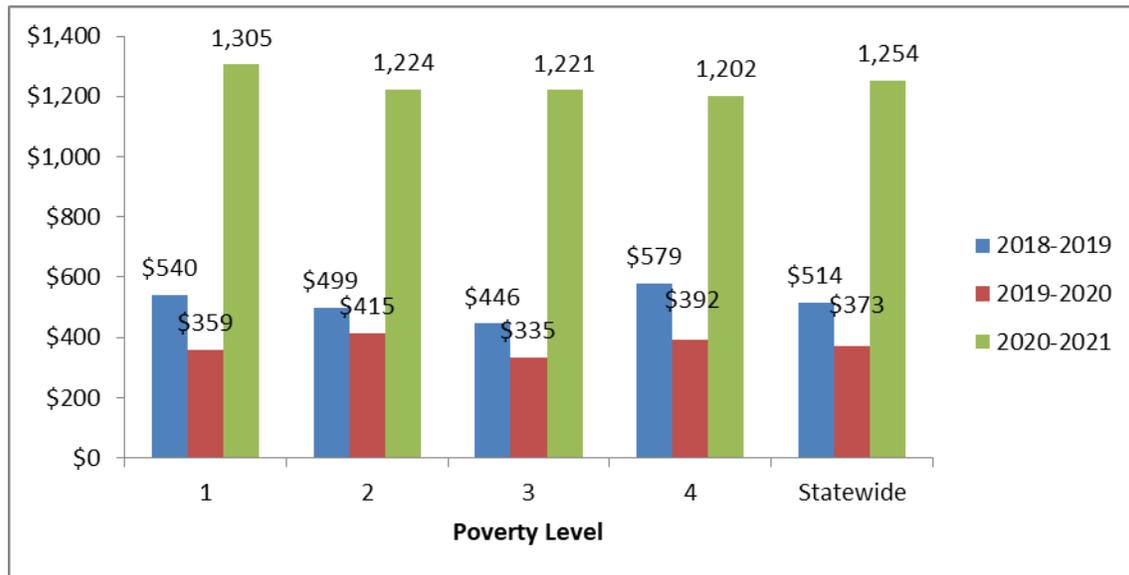


The last section of Table 5 is the average supplemental arrearage by poverty level and by utility. The current statewide average supplemental arrearage for USPP participants was \$1,254,<sup>27</sup> an increase of \$881 or 236 percent, from \$373 in the 2019-2020 heating season. Prior to the current report, the average supplemental arrearage was \$373 in the 2019-2020 heating season, which was the lowest since 2015-2016, and decreased by \$141 from \$514 in the 2018-2019 heating season. The drastically increased supplemental arrearage from the previous heating season to 2020-2021 is a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The participating utilities slightly increased the average monthly supplemental payment for USPP participants as indicated in the above section but deferred the unpaid bill into the supplemental arrearages and caused the large arrearages increase. The average supplemental arrearage for all poverty levels increased from the previous heating season that reversed the previously decreasing average supplemental arrearages for the fourth consecutive heating season since 2015-2016. Figure illustrates a three consecutive year comparison by poverty level, which demonstrates a fluctuation with the pandemic and prior to the pandemic. If the previous decline of average supplemental arrearages from 2015-2016 to 2019-2020 across all poverty levels indicated that the improved economy after the 2008 recession had a positive impact on low-income customers, then the increase in the

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

average supplemental arrearage in 2020-2021 is an indication that the on-going COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on USPP customers resulting in increased unpaid bills.

**Figure 8 Average Supplemental Arrearage by Poverty Level for 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021**



**PARTICIPANT ARREARAGES AND PROGRAM COMPLIANCE**

Table 6 presents the percentage of USPP participants, MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and all other non-MEAP residential customers who were in arrears on their utility bills as of March 31, 2021, which is a snapshot scenario. As was the pattern experienced over the previous heating seasons, USPP participants were more likely to be in arrears than either MEAP-certified non-USPP participants or non-MEAP customers of the utility in the winter heating season. Non-MEAP eligible customers were the lowest percentage of customers in arrears during the 2020-2021 winter heating season. For all reporting utilities, the percentage of customers in arrears was 39 percent for USPP participants, 28 percent for MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and 14 percent for non-MEAP-eligible customers as of March 31, 2021. The data showed the same pattern as in the previous year's heating season. The proportion of USPP participants who were in arrears was about eight percentage points lower than the previous 47 percent observed in the previous period. The percentage is a relative number that depends on

both the USPP participants with arrearages and the USPP participants in total. If the number of USPP participants decrease in a proportion larger than the USPP participants with arrearages, the percentage point will be lower. That may be the case here.

**Table 6 PERCENTAGE OF USPP PARTICIPANTS, MEAP-ELIGIBLE CUSTOMERS, BY POVERTY LEVEL, AND NON-MEAP CUSTOMERS IN ARREARS <sup>28</sup>**

UTILITY	USPP Participants					MEAP-Eligible Non-Participants					Non-MEAP Customers
	Poverty Level					Poverty Level					
	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall	
Baltimore Gas and Electric Company	53%	41%	42%	43%	<b>45%</b>	54%	53%	31%	42%	<b>46%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas Division	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	53%	31%	33%	24%	<b>38%</b>	<b>22%</b>
Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	41%	32%	34%	38%	<b>36%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	40%	29%	33%	43%	<b>35%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	40%	30%	21%	25%	<b>31%</b>	26%	15%	13%	13%	<b>18%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Delmarva Power & Light Company	49%	36%	34%	41%	<b>41%</b>	47%	31%	29%	40%	<b>37%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Easton Utilities	0%	2%	3%	8%	<b>2%</b>	5%	4%	4%	4%	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	40%	25%	25%	17%	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>
Mayor & Council of Berlin	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	119%	100%	100%	100%	<b>109%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Potomac Electric Power Company	41%	33%	39%	43%	<b>38%</b>	41%	30%	36%	42%	<b>37%</b>	<b>20%</b>
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.	36%	28%	27%	42%	<b>32%</b>	25%	20%	17%	24%	<b>22%</b>	<b>19%</b>
The Potomac Edison Company	38%	18%	15%	14%	<b>23%</b>	33%	25%	21%	20%	<b>26%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Washington Gas Light Company	15%	12%	14%	10%	<b>13%</b>	24%	13%	16%	18%	<b>19%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>14%</b>

Table 7 presents the average dollar amount of arrearages for USPP participants, MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and non-MEAP customers. Compared to the 2019-2020 data, the average arrearage balances for both USPP customers and MEAP-certified non-USPP participants increased at a large pace. For the 2020-2021 heating season, the overall average arrearage for USPP participants was \$758, increasing by \$331 or 78 percent, from \$427 in the

<sup>28</sup> A USPP customer is considered in arrears if some monthly billing is past due on March 31, 2021.

Maryland Public Service Commission  
USPP Report, Winter 2020-2021

2019-2020 winter. In the 2019-2020 report, the average arrearages decreased by \$32 or about seven percent, to \$427 from \$459 in the 2018-2019 winter. The average arrearage balance for MEAP eligible non-USPP customers was \$713 in 2020-2021 and increased by \$321 or 82 percent, from \$392 in the 2019-2020 winter. Across all poverty levels, the average arrearage balances for USPP participants increased from the previous heating season as shown in Figure 9.

**Table 7 ARREARAGES FOR USPP PARTICIPANTS, MEAP-CERTIFIED NON-USPP PARTICIPANTS, AND NON-MEAP CUSTOMERS IN ARREARS BY POVERTY LEVEL<sup>29,30</sup>**

UTILITY	USPP Participants (\$)					MEAP Certified Non-USPP Participants (\$)					Non-MEAP Customers (\$)
	Poverty Level					Poverty Level					
	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall	
<b>Baltimore Gas and Electric Company</b>	776	750	699	789	<b>752</b>	1,066	965	904	809	<b>979</b>	<b>534</b>
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.</b>	288	172	117	212	<b>214</b>	247	250	224	340	<b>250</b>	<b>416.46</b>
<b>Delmarva Power &amp; Light Company</b>	1,000	869	904	1,064	<b>947</b>	1,197	924	1,687	1,162	<b>1233</b>	<b>739</b>
<b>Easton Utilities</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Mayor &amp; Council of Berlin</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Potomac Electric Power Company</b>	1071	958	939	1123	<b>577</b>	1,071	958	939	1,123	<b>1,027</b>	<b>557</b>
<b>Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b>	288	187	206	195	<b>440</b>	288	187	206	195	<b>233</b>	<b>319</b>
<b>The Potomac Edison Company</b>	471	375	257	326	<b>314</b>	471	375	257	326	<b>383</b>	<b>291</b>
<b>Washington Gas Light Company</b>	389	337	416	384	<b>263</b>	389	337	416	384	<b>385</b>	<b>310</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>496</b>

<sup>29</sup> Customer is in arrears if any monthly billing is past due on March 31, 2021.

<sup>30</sup> N/A indicates either a company is not required to provide data or a company does not track data by poverty level.

**Figure 9 USPP Arrearage by Poverty Level for Three Consecutive Heating Seasons**

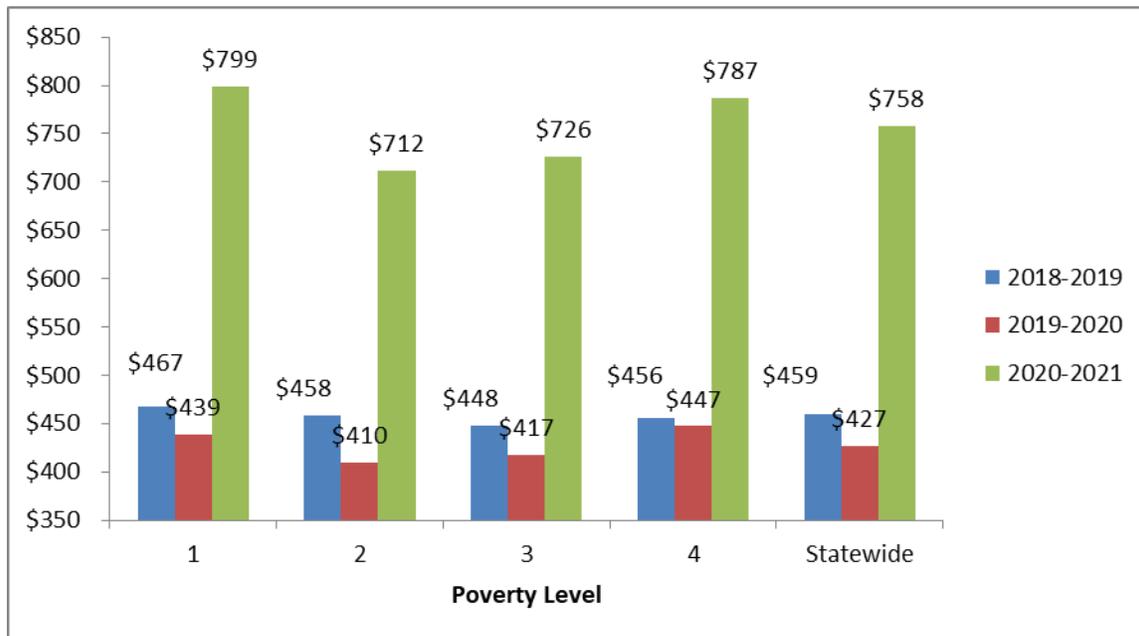


Table 8 presents the percentage of USPP participants who complied with the payment provisions of the program for the 2020-2021 heating season and compares those rates to the previous season’s results. According to the USPP provisions, a customer can be removed from the program and a customer’s service may be terminated if the amount due on two consecutive monthly bills is not paid. As in previous years, BGE and Columbia Gas reported that, as a matter of company policy, neither removed customers from the program if the customer did not comply with the USPP payment rules during the 2020-2021 heating season. The CUC-Cambridge, CUC-Citizens, CUC-Sandpiper, and Elkton did not report data because of the CUC decision that it would not disconnect any customer during the pandemic. Because these companies do not enforce this provision of the program, they do not track the percentage of customers who complied with the program rules. Also, for that reason, the statewide compliance percentage of approximately 94 percent shown in Table 8 may overstate the proportion of customers that comply with the USPP payment provisions. The 94 percent compliance rate indicates that only six percent of USPP participants were removed from the program. When compared with the previous heating seasons, the statewide compliance rate decreased by approximately four percentage points from a 98 percent compliance rate in the 2019-2020 winter

heating season. Seven of 13 utilities reported the compliance rate. SMECO reported a 99 percent compliance rate and was followed by PE with 90 percent and Pepco with a compliance rate of 87 percent. Major utilities' compliance rates were above 87 percent. Municipal utilities, Berlin and Easton Utilities, reported a compliance rate of 100 and 84 percent, respectively. The compliance rates across all poverty levels showed compliance rates between 94-96 percent in 2020-2021.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> The percentage numbers are rounded up to the nearest integer.

**Table 8 PERCENTAGE OF USPP PARTICIPANTS WHO COMPLIED WITH PROGRAM PAYMENT PROVISIONS BY POVERTY LEVEL DURING THE LAST TWO HEATING SEASONS<sup>32</sup>**

UTILITY	Compliance 2020-2021					Compliance 2019-2020				
	Poverty Level					Poverty Level				
	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall
Baltimore Gas and Electric Company	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Delmarva Power & Light Company	85%	87%	88%	89%	<b>87%</b>	96%	96%	95%	94%	<b>95%</b>
Easton Utilities	77%	86%	86%	85%	<b>84%</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>
Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	91%	92%	100%	80%	<b>91%</b>
Mayor & Council of Berlin	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>
Potomac Electric Power Company	86%	88%	86%	89%	<b>87%</b>	94%	95%	95%	100%	<b>95%</b>
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.	99%	100%	99%	99%	<b>99%</b>	97%	99%	98%	97%	<b>98%</b>
The Potomac Edison Company	98%	85%	84%	88%	<b>90%</b>	97%	88%	90%	89%	<b>91%</b>
Washington Gas Light Company	82%	84%	84%	85%	<b>83%</b>	76%	69%	80%	82%	<b>76%</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	94%	94%	95%	96%	<b>94%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>98%</b>

### HEATING SEASON TERMINATIONS

Table 9 presents the number of USPP participants, MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and non-MEAP customers whose services were terminated during the winter heating season. Of the 16,635 USPP participants, three (BGE, DPL and Pepco) of the 13

<sup>32</sup> BGE and Columbia Gas do not remove customers from USPP for failure to pay the amount due on two consecutive monthly bills.

N/A indicates either a company is not required to provide data or a company does not track data by poverty level.

reporting utilities collectively terminated 86 USPP participants. It is the lowest termination number since the inception of the USPP. When compared to 2019-2020, the termination number decreased by 1,317 or approximately 94 percent.<sup>33</sup> BGE terminated 30 USPP customers in the 2020-2021 winter and represented a decrease by 1,184 from the 1,214 terminations or approximately 98 percent of the State's total reported USPP terminations in the current report. Delmarva and Pepco reported termination decreases of 59 and 88 percent, respectively. These low terminations reflect that the utilities implemented the Commission's disconnection moratorium in response to COVID-19.

**Table 9 NUMBER OF WINTER HEATING SEASON TERMINATIONS<sup>34</sup>**

UTILITY	USPP Participants					MEAP-Certified Non-USPP Participants					Non-MEAP Customers
	Poverty Level					Poverty Level					
	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall	
Baltimore Gas and Electric Company	14	4	7	5	30	2	0	1	2	5	435
Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Delmarva Power & Light Company	23	13	9	5	50	1	0	0	0	1	523
Easton Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mayor & Council of Berlin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Potomac Electric Power Company	5	1	0	0	6	18	5	3	4	30	1,911
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	578
The Potomac Edison Company	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Washington Gas Light Company	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3,479</b>

<sup>33</sup> The numbers exclude Choptank for both the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 heating seasons.

<sup>34</sup> Note: Columbia Gas and WGL each has a no-termination policy during the heating season.

## **HIGH ENERGY CONSUMPTION**

Table 10 presents the percentage of USPP participants who consumed more than 135 percent of their utility system's average usage. Data in this table show the proportions of USPP customers who consume higher-than-average levels of energy by poverty level.<sup>35</sup> Due to this increased consumption, these customers will have higher-than-average heating bills. These higher bills may tend to generate greater arrearages, thereby creating a higher risk of defaulting on payment plans and a greater risk of termination. For the 2020-2021 heating season, approximately 25 percent of USPP participants consumed more than 135 percent of their utilities' system average usage, which was 11 percentage points lower than the 36 percent observed in the 2019-2020 heating season. There was not much variation by poverty level for the 2020-2021 winter, which all decreased by approximately 10 to 12 percentage points from the previous percentage reported in the 2019-2020 season. Due to the moratorium on terminations in the 2020-2021 heating season, the customers with high usage may not have been disconnected during that time.

---

<sup>35</sup> The data did not include those customers with high usage who were referred to local weatherization agencies and also do not include the small utilities serving less than 5,000 customers since they are not required to report this information.

**Table 10 PERCENTAGE OF USPP PARTICIPANTS WHO CONSUMED MORE THAN 135% OF SYSTEM AVERAGE ENERGY DURING THE MOST RECENT HEATING SEASON<sup>36</sup>**

UTILITY	Poverty Level				
	1	2	3	4	Overall
<b>Baltimore Gas and Electric Company</b>	24%	23%	23%	24%	24%
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Delmarva Power &amp; Light Company</b>	25%	25%	26%	27%	<b>26%</b>
<b>Easton Utilities</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Mayor &amp; Council of Berlin</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Potomac Electric Power Company</b>	23%	28%	29%	35%	<b>27%</b>
<b>Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b>	31%	27%	25%	25%	<b>28%</b>
<b>The Potomac Edison Company</b>	46%	40%	55%	48%	<b>47%</b>
<b>Washington Gas Light Company</b>	68%	66%	64%	95%	<b>68%</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>

**PRIMARY HEAT SOURCE**

Table 11 presents the percentage of USPP participants, MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and non-MEAP customers whose primary heat source is provided by the indicated utility. For all utilities in the 2020-2021 heating season, 52 percent of USPP customers, 64 percent of MEAP-certified non-USPP participants, and 51 percent of non-MEAP customers received their primary heating source from the utility responding to the data request. The percentage of USPP customers using the reporting utilities as their heating source decreased 12 percentage points compared to 64 percent in the previous heating season. The data applicable to the primary heating source vary across the utilities. The percentage of USPP customers whose primary heating source was provided by the reporting utilities ranged from 15 percent to 100 percent among the utilities. Two gas companies, CGM and WGL, reported that they were the sole heating source for their entire customer base. BGE reported 80 percent of USPP customers using BGE as the heating source for the 2020-2021 heating season, which combined its electric

---

<sup>36</sup> N/A indicates either a company is not required to provide data or a company does not track usage data by poverty level.

and gas services. Pepco and PE reported 82 and 84 percent of their customers using them as the heating source, respectively. DPL, an electric-only utility, reported 19 percent, four percentage points higher than the 15 percent observed in the 2019-2020 winter season, which was the lowest among the reporting utilities for the three most recent reporting seasons.

**Table 11 PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS, MEAP-CERTIFIED NON-USPP PARTICIPANTS, AND NON-MEAP CUSTOMERS WHOSE PRIMARY HEAT SOURCE IS PROVIDED BY THE UTILITY BY POVERTY LEVEL<sup>37</sup>**

UTILITY	USPP Participants					MEAP-Certified Non-USPP Participants					Non-MEAP Customers
	Poverty Level					Poverty Level					
	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall	
<b>Baltimore Gas and Electric Company</b>	79%	79%	83%	82%	<b>80%</b>	98%	93%	98%	100%	<b>97%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%	<b>96%</b>
<b>Delmarva Power &amp; Light Company</b>	14%	22%	22%	20%	<b>19%</b>	16%	24%	29%	23%	<b>22%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Easton Utilities</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>Mayor &amp; Council of Berlin</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Potomac Electric Power Company</b>	81%	89%	77%	76%	<b>82%</b>	68%	74%	72%	73%	<b>71%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>The Potomac Edison Company</b>	86%	85%	83%	82%	<b>84%</b>	84%	83%	86%	84%	<b>84%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Washington Gas Light Company</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	49%	50%	55%	56%	<b>52%</b>	65%	62%	65%	64%	<b>64%</b>	<b>51%</b>

<sup>37</sup> N/A indicates data not available; or small utilities (CUC-Cambridge, Berlin, and Easton) are not required to report data; Elkton Gas and SMECO did not provide data for USPP, MEAP-certified non-USPP customers and non-MEAP participants.

## **MEAP GRANTS**

Table 12 presents the average MEAP grant payable to the utility at the time of the customer's enrollment in the USPP. Most USPP participating utilities work closely with OHEP to lower their customers' arrearages and unpaid balances in order that they may be enrolled into USPP and be eligible for an alternate payment plan. OHEP's benefit calculation methodology provides larger MEAP grants at poverty levels reflecting lower incomes. The data indicates that the overall average benefit was \$432 in 2020-2021, lower than the \$513 in the 2019-2020 heating season. As seen in the previous years, the size of the MEAP benefit awarded to customers decreased as the poverty level/household income increased. Customers in Poverty Level 1, at the lowest household income level, received the highest MEAP benefit, an average of \$457; those in Poverty Levels 2, 3, and 4 were reported to have received an average MEAP grant of \$420, \$419, and \$412, respectively. Customers of Columbia Gas, BGE, WGL, and SMECO received the largest average grant at \$638, \$510, \$509, and \$436, respectively. The utility customers that received MEAP grants at all poverty levels for the reporting utilities in the 2020-2021 winter season were lower than the previous report.

**Table 12 AVERAGE MARYLAND ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT FOR USPP PARTICIPANTS BY POVERTY LEVEL FOR THE LAST TWO HEATING SEASONS<sup>38</sup>**

UTILITY	Average 2020-2021 Grants (\$)					Average 2019-2020 Grants (\$)				
	Poverty Level					Poverty Level				
	1	2	3	4	Overall	1	2	3	4	Overall
<b>Baltimore Gas and Electric Company</b>	\$544	\$519	\$479	\$449	<b>\$510</b>	\$584	\$539	\$505	\$481	<b>\$538</b>
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Gas Division</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$326	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$326</b>
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.</b>	\$656	\$624	\$630	\$637	<b>\$638</b>	\$725	\$724	\$668	\$698	<b>\$706</b>
<b>Delmarva Power &amp; Light Company</b>	\$378	\$343	\$353	\$352	<b>\$355</b>	\$400	\$377	\$365	\$376	<b>\$382</b>
<b>Easton Utilities</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$427	\$290	\$293	\$389	<b>\$349</b>
<b>Mayor &amp; Council of Berlin</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Potomac Electric Power Company</b>	\$305	\$303	\$313	\$349	<b>\$311</b>	\$353	\$346	\$350	\$369	<b>\$352</b>
<b>Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.</b>	\$463	\$417	\$429	\$424	<b>\$436</b>	\$515	\$504	\$516	\$484	<b>\$509</b>
<b>The Potomac Edison Company</b>	\$335	\$293	\$311	\$316	<b>\$315</b>	\$327	\$297	\$317	\$335	<b>\$315</b>
<b>Washington Gas Light Company</b>	\$565	\$469	\$495	\$475	<b>\$509</b>	\$546	\$576	\$615	\$576	<b>\$575</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$457</b>	<b>\$420</b>	<b>\$419</b>	<b>\$412</b>	<b>\$432</b>	<b>\$545</b>	<b>\$511</b>	<b>\$491</b>	<b>\$476</b>	<b>\$513</b>

<sup>38</sup> N/A indicates either a company is not required to provide data or a company does not track data by poverty level. The grants at each poverty level and overall are calculated as weighted average by participants.

## **CONCLUSION**

The data reported to the Commission from the participating utilities for the 2020-2021 winter heating season shows the COVID-19 impact on the USPP. The total number of USPP participants continues to decrease from the previous heating season at a relatively larger decreasing rate. The number of statewide USPP participants was 16,635 during the 2020-2021 heating season, decreasing by 6,680 or 29 percent of USPP participants as compared with decreasing by 4,818 or 16.9 percent from the 2018-2019 heating season in the 2019-2020 USPP report. The USPP enrollment rate decreased to 49 percent from 2019-2020's 64 percent of the total MEAP customers. Similarly the USPP enrollment rate continues to decrease from 0.68 percent in the 2019-2020 to 0.48 percent of the total utility residential customer base in this report. Other indicators for the USPP show that this latest heating season reversed some declining trends from the previous heating season.<sup>39</sup> The percentage of USPP customers who made supplemental payments in the 2020-2021 heating season increased to 19 percent from seven percent in the prior report. Although the average supplemental payment increased slightly from \$51 in 2019-2020 to \$56 in 2020-2021, the average supplemental arrearage for USPP customers reversed what had been previously a downward trend and increased from \$373 in 2019-2020 to \$1,245 in the 2020-2021 heating season. These changes obviously indicate the considerable impact on USPP customers by the COVID-19 pandemic. Statewide, the average MEAP grant decreased from the previous heating season after increasing from the 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 heating seasons.

During the 2020-2021 winter season, federal, state, and local governments, the Commission, and utilities provided help to Maryland utility customers through public policy and economic assistance in response to the pandemic. The terminations were the lowest since the inception of the USPP. Three utilities—BGE, DPL, and Pepco—reported 86 of USPP participants' services terminated, the lowest terminations since the program inception, due to the moratorium imposed by the Commission in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

---

<sup>39</sup> In the section of the conclusion in the 2019-2020 USPP Report, it states "a decrease in so many indicators has been observed as the last winter season. These changes may be associated with the improved national economic conditions observed in recent years after the 2008 economic crisis."

**APPENDIX A1 2020-2021 HEATING SEASON REPORTING**  
**UTILITIES BASIC INFORMATION**

<b>UTILITY</b>	<b>Participated in USPP</b>	<b>Serving Customers</b>	<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Included in Data Analysis</b>
Baltimore Gas and Electric Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas and Electric	Yes
Chesapeake Utilities - Cambridge Division	Yes	< 5,000	Gas	Yes
Chesapeake Utilities - Citizens Division	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Chesapeake Utilities - Sandpiper Energy	No	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc.	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Delmarva Power and Light Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Electric	Yes
Easton Utilities Commission <sup>40</sup>	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas and Electric	Yes
Chesapeake Utilities - Elkton Gas Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Hagerstown Light Department	No	≥ 5,000	Electric	No
Mayor & Council of Berlin	Yes	< 5,000	Electric	Yes
Potomac Electric Power Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Electric	Yes
The Potomac Edison Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Electric	Yes
Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Inc.	Yes	≥ 5,000	Electric	Yes
Thurmont	No	< 5,000	Electric	No
UGI Utilities, Inc.	No	< 5,000	Gas	No
Washington Gas Light Company	Yes	≥ 5,000	Gas	Yes
Williamsport Municipal Electric Light Plant	No	< 5,000	Electric	No

---

<sup>40</sup> Easton Utilities has provided data as a small company although it has more than 5,000 customers.

**ATTACHMENT 1 - MOTIONS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION (PC53)**

**ML 231666**

**Motion #1 Extending the Moratorium**

Establish a moratorium prohibiting any “Public Service Company” as defined in Maryland Code, Public Utilities Article § 1-101, from billing or collecting any fee or charge imposed for a late or otherwise untimely payment, or from terminating service except where Commission regulations permit termination without notice, for any account that serves in whole or in part a dwelling unit or residence, until October 1, 2020. To the extent any Commission regulations, orders, or tariffs conflict with this order, they are suspended until further direction of the Commission.

Order that any notice of termination of service by a Public Service Company of any account that serves a dwelling unit or residence and where the notice was or may be sent prior to October 1, 2020 shall be invalid and may not be used to satisfy the Commission's termination notice requirements. To the extent any Commission regulations, orders, or tariffs conflict with this order, they are suspended until further direction of the Commission.

**Motion #2 Extending Notice Period to 45 Days**

For any service termination by a Public Service Company on any account that serves a dwelling unit or residence, where such service termination requires notice under current Commission regulations, the notice must be sent to the customer at least forty-five days prior to the date on or after which service termination may occur. To the extent any Commission regulations, orders, or tariffs conflict with this order, they are suspended until further direction of the Commission.

**Motion #3 Setting Minimum Repayment Term**

Any structured payment plan offered by a Public Service Company under Commission jurisdiction to any Maryland residential customer in arrears or otherwise unable to pay must contain a minimum twelve-month repayment term.

In the case of any customer certified by the Maryland Office of Home Energy Programs as low income, the company must offer a minimum repayment term of twenty-four months. To the extent any Commission regulations, orders, or tariffs conflict with this order, they are suspended until further direction of the Commission.

**Motion #4 Waiving Down Payment and Deposits**

Prohibit any Public Service Company under Commission jurisdiction from collecting or requiring down payments or deposits as a condition of beginning a payment plan for any residential customer, including both current and new customers. To the extent any Commission regulations, orders, or tariffs conflict with this order, they are suspended until further direction of the Commission.

**Motion #5 Negotiation of Payment Plan**

Prohibit a Public Service Company from refusing to negotiate or denying a payment plan to a residential Customer receiving service because the customer failed to meet the terms and conditions of an alternate payment plan during the past 18 months. To the extent any Commission regulations, orders, or tariffs conflict with this order, they are suspended until further direction of the Commission.