

Wilmington, Delaware
March 6, 2025

#xxxx

WHEREAS, the Wilmington City Council 2022-2025 Strategic Plan prioritizes a “Health

Sponsor:

Wilmington” and “Stabilized Wilmington,” where residents have access to access to

**Council
Member
Darby**

electricity, heating, and water, which are essential for public health, safety, and well-being;
and

Co-Sponsors:

WHEREAS, Delmarva Power provides critical utility services to thousands of Delaware

**Council
Members
Owens
Hackett**

residents, including vulnerable populations such as seniors, low-income families, and
individuals with medical conditions. Economic hardships, rising energy costs, and other
financial challenges have left many residents struggling to pay their utility bills, increasing the
risk of disconnections and financial penalties; and

WHEREAS, economic hardships, rising energy costs, and other financial challenges have
left many residents struggling to pay their utility bills, increasing the risk of disconnections,
and financial penalties. The discontinuation of utility services negatively impacts public health,
safety, and overall quality of life, particularly for households with children, individuals with
disabilities, and medically vulnerable residents. Utility shutoffs also further jeopardize the
stability of Wilmington’s neighborhoods by triggering condemnation actions that can result in
property abandonment and vacancies; and

WHEREAS, the Wilmington City Council affirms the sentiments of the letter sent by
members of the Delaware General Assembly to Acting Public Advocate Ruth Ann Price on
January 30, 2025, requesting an investigation of inordinately expensive electric bills. This
Council also asks for further action to provide short-term and long-term relief to Delmarva
Power customers facing unaffordable debts; and

WHEREAS, previous moratoriums on shut-offs and late fees during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the effectiveness of such policies in stabilizing communities and preventing unnecessary hardships. The honorable Governor, honorable members of the Delaware General Assembly, and the Delaware Public Service Commission have regulatory authority over utility providers operating within the state and can implement consumer protections during economic and public health crises; and

WHEREAS, Delmarva Power has cited “factors like extreme cold, increased usage, and cost of energy” as contributing to higher energy costs. The company has responded to concerns by expanding customer service to offer payment arrangements, due date extensions, budget billing, energy assistance resources for eligible customers, waivers of late payment fees for January and February, suspensions of disconnections for nonpayment in February, and waivers of deposits for disconnected customers who are seeking to restore service. These actions are insufficient to protect vulnerable customers from financial hardship resulting from their bills.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON that this Council urges honorable Governor Matt Meyer, honorable members of the Delaware General Assembly, and the Delaware Public Service Commission to immediately institute a moratorium on electric utility shut-offs and late fees for residential customers for a period of 6 to 12 months, or until a comprehensive review of affordability measures is completed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council recommends that the moratorium apply to all residential customers experiencing financial hardship, with a streamlined process for customers to self-certify their need without burdensome documentation requirements. No late fees, penalties, or interest charges should accrue on overdue balances during the

moratorium period. Delmarva Power should also conduct public awareness campaigns to ensure affected residents are aware of the moratorium, assistance programs, and their rights under this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council calls on Delmarva Power to work with the Delaware Public Service Commission, state legislators and agencies, and nonprofit organizations to expand financial assistance programs, including flexible repayment plans and bill forgiveness options for low-income households.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council expresses support for the production of a quarterly report by the Delaware Public Service Commission to the Delaware General Assembly detailing the number of customers impacted, financial implications, and recommendations for long-term affordability solutions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that for the long-term well-being of utilities customers, this Council encourages the General Assembly to establish a task force to explore long-term protections, including energy affordability reforms, income-based billing models, and expanded funding for low-income energy assistance programs.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: The Wilmington City Council 2022-2025 Strategic Plan prioritizes a “Health Wilmington” and “Stabilized Wilmington,” where residents have access to access to electricity, heating, and water, which are essential for public health, safety, and well-being. This Resolution expresses support for the appeal by members of the Delaware General

Assembly to the Public Acting Public Advocate Ruth Ann Price on January 30, 2025, requesting an investigation of inordinately expensive electric bills. It also urges further action for the short-term and long-term protection of Delmarva Power customers from financial hardship including, but not limited to, immediately instituting a moratorium on electric utility shut-offs and late fees for residential customers for a period of 6 to 12 months, or until a comprehensive review of affordability measures is completed.