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# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **SnoPUD to Temporarily Suspend Reading Meters Due to COVID**

*PUD customers can call Customer Service at 425-783-1000 for help with estimated bills*

EVERETT, Wash. – With a focus on keeping its employees and customers safe during the COVID-19 outbreak, Snohomish County PUD has temporarily suspended reading meters and paused sending meter readers into the field. The delivery of critical power and water services remains unaffected.

As a result, PUD residential and small business customers may temporarily receive an estimated bill rather than one based on an accurate read. The PUD has made significant strides in recent years to improve its estimation accuracy. Estimated bills now draw on both prior usage patterns and known weather conditions to predict customer usage during the month their meter was not read.

However, customers whose behaviors have changed during the COVID-19 outbreak will likely receive an estimated bill that reflects their typical usage. That includes residential customers who are staying home and using more energy or small business customers whose businesses have closed.

After the PUD begins reading meters again, any difference between the estimated usage and the actual usage is balanced on the customer's next bill. This is known as a "true-up" bill and may result in either a credit to the customer's account or additional payment.

Customers who believe their estimated bill is a mistake, or struggle to pay their bill, are encouraged to call the PUD's Customer Service at 425-783-1000 and talk to a representative about solutions. The PUD is prepared to assist customers and support their needs in this time. Options include:

- Customers may email a photo of their PUD meter dial and meter number and send to [meterreadingphoto@snopud.com](mailto:meterreadingphoto@snopud.com) to have their estimated bill adjusted to reflect the actual read.
- Customers may opt to pay the amount billed for the previous month if they believe it more accurately reflects recent usage.
- Customers can join the PUD's Budget Payment Plan, which equalizes a customer's payments each month throughout the year.
- Customers who have suffered sudden job loss or business limitations may seek support through the PUD's Community Support Plan. Eligible customers can receive a credit on their bill.

The PUD has also temporarily paused disconnects and late fees to help customers.

"We have improved our processes around estimating bills, but we also understand the challenge some of our customers have with estimates," said John Haarlow, Snohomish PUD CEO/GM. "I want customers to know that we are dedicated to finding solutions for them during this time."

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**PUD MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Aaron Swaney (425) 783-1776