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DC Agencies launch #Here2HelpDC awareness campaign to assist utility consumers during pandemic

Four District agencies charged with serving DC utility consumers today kicked off “#Here2HelpDC,” a public awareness campaign to inform residents and businesses about energy and money-saving initiatives that will help minimize negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), DC Public Service Commission (DCPSC), DC Sustainable Energy Utility (DCSEU), and the Office of the People’s Counsel for the District of Columbia (OPC) will share tips and tools to help consumers conserve energy and water resources, reduce billing costs and to utilize relief and payment programs. The agencies are concerned that with many people staying at home and consequently using more electricity, gas and water, ratepayers will be faced with higher bills than usual. In response to the pandemic, the DC Council passed emergency legislation prohibiting the disconnection of electric, natural gas, water and telecommunications services for non-payment. Consumer advocates fear that when those restrictions are lifted, bills will be hard to handle, particularly for District residents out-of-work and owners of shuttered business experiencing financial hardship.

“Working together, we can teach consumers self-help measures that will save them from even more hardships when things get back to normal,” said People’s Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye. “I am pleased to have OPC participate in #Here2HelpDC.”

“We want District residents and businesses to know that we are with them every step of the way during the COVID-19 recovery. By partnering with District agencies, consumers can easily find help and resources to maintain their essential services,” said Willie L. Phillips, Chairman of the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia.

“We are proud to collaborate with DOEE, DCPSC, and OPC on this campaign,” said Ted Trabue, Director of the DCSEU. “Reducing the burden of energy costs on residents and businesses is critically important right now and we want the community to better understand the ways in which the District stands ready to help.”

“Residents in the District have faced an unprecedented level of uncertainty and hardship. It is the priority of DOEE to help ensure that they will not experience more difficulties as we all emerge from this emergency,” said Tommy Wells, Director of the Department of Energy and Environment. “#Here2HelpDC will aid in the effort to inform and educate the public of their options going forward.”

#Here2HelpDC will culminate in mid-July with a virtual summit where agency leaders will urge consumers to take advantage of payment plans, financial assistance programs and rebates and incentives to help them save energy and money.

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