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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
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Mr. Chris Browning  
Utilities Director  
City of Oklahoma City Utilities Department  
420 W. Main St., Fifth Floor  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

March 13, 2020

Dear Director Browning,

In light of the public health emergency caused by the global spread of COVID-19, I write to request that the City of Oklahoma City temporarily suspend water disconnections due to non-payments to ensure all customers have access to clean water and wastewater services. Everyone in our community needs access to clean running water to reduce and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. It is our responsibility to do everything in our power to protect our residents during this outbreak, and our response should reflect our commitment to fulfilling that responsibility.

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that Americans regularly wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This guidance has been proven to reduce exposure and prevent the spread of all diseases, including coronavirus. As our nation addresses this global pandemic, it is imperative that Americans are able to follow CDC guidance and protect themselves and others by taking simple measures such as washing their hands. Additionally, individuals are less able to practice social distancing or stay at home if they do not have access to clean water in their homes.

The Oklahoma City Utilities Department has acknowledged that 14,672 households with residents in Oklahoma City, or approximately 6.9 percent of Oklahoma City's total water utility customer base, had their water shut off in 2019 due to underpayment of bills. While this issue clearly needs to be addressed more broadly, we must ensure in the short term that Oklahoma City residents have access to clean water to prevent the spread of disease.

I am fighting to secure financial assistance from the federal government, and I believe the federal government should work closely with state and local governments to ensure that we stop water shutoffs and restore service to homes currently shut off. In the interim, as we work to address a growing health crisis, I respectfully urge you to take immediate action to temporarily suspend water shutoffs for nonpaying households—it is time for us to take extra steps to mitigate the spread

of COVID-19. We have seen the devastating effects of this outbreak around the world, and we have the opportunity to take preventative measures that can save lives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kendra S. Horn  
Member of Congress

**Cc:** The Honorable David Holt  
Mayor of Oklahoma City  
200 North Walker Avenue, Third Floor  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Craig Freeman  
City Manager of Oklahoma City  
200 North Walker Avenue, Third Floor  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102