**COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND**

**2026 Legislative Session**

Resolution No. CR-081-2026

Proposed by Council Members Adams-Stafford and Hunter

Introduced by Council Members Adams-Stafford, Hunter, Oriadha, Olson, Burroughs, Adams, Ivey and Fisher

Co-Sponsors Council Member Blegay

Date of Introduction September 1, 2026

**RESOLUTION**

A RESOLUTION concerning

A Moratorium on Utility Shut-Offs

For the purpose of requesting the Maryland Public Service Commission to impose a utility shut-off moratorium for certain periods for low-and moderate-income households, certain senior households, and households with persons with certain medical conditions in Prince George's County; to evaluate the cause of current utility rate increases necessitating utility shut-offs for residents of Prince George's County, with special attention on the role of data centers in neighboring communities, as well as the impact of last winter and this summer on utility increases; requesting additional customer protections; and generally regarding utility shut-offs in Prince George's County.

WHEREAS, Title 4, Subtitle 1, Section 4-102 of the Public Utilities Article, Annotated Code of Maryland permits the Maryland Public Service Commission to set just and reasonable rates for a public service company, as maximum rate, minimum rate, or both; and

WHEREAS, Maryland is part of a large electrical transmission network for electricity, operated by an entity called PJM, the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection (PJM). This regional network serves thirteen states and the District of Columbia, and plans and manages the transfer of electrical power across state lines. PJM also purchases power from electric power suppliers in a wholesale market, and creates charges based on services and practices they implement. This further affects customers with their electric bills; and

WHEREAS there is a need to impose a utility shut-off moratorium <u>from January 1 to February 28 and from June 1 through August 31</u>, [three-month moratorium on utility price

increases] for low- and moderate-income households, certain senior households, and households with persons with certain medical conditions in Prince George's County; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive study of the causes for the rise in rates should be conducted to ascertain the necessity of the current rates and to study patterns of utility use and associated customer costs to determine whether further pausing of shut offs is necessary; and

WHEREAS, service rates within Prince George's County and the State of Maryland have continued to increase; and

WHEREAS, residents in Prince George's County are facing unprecedented challenges in affording essential services; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to assess the role of data centers in the PJM regional network on rates and usage; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Office of People's Counsel's Press Release – March 19, 2026, stated that data center load forecasts are highly uncertain, raising concerns about unnecessary transmission infrastructure, and if data center demand in PJM is overestimated, Maryland customers will pay for unnecessary transmission infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Office of People's Counsel's Press Release – June 23, 2026, indicated that the PJM staff's proposed plan for addressing data centers is detrimental to residential customers and provides, that the state consumer advocates' alternative proposal includes several features essential to protecting residential customers from higher costs and worse reliability because of data centers; and

WHEREAS, as reflected in the Committee Report for CR-11-2026, the Maryland Office of People's Counsel's June 2024 report (updated in March of 2025) shows how utility rates have changed over time. Using a variety of figures and tables, the Report reveals that most Maryland utility customers have seen their gas and electricity rates increase substantially over the last 10-15 years, with some rates increasing by multiples of two or three; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2025 American Community Survey provides that approximately 101,600 residents (about 10% of households and individuals) in Prince George's County live below the federal poverty line based on recent American Community Survey multi-year estimates. Broader financial hardship metrics, such as the United For ALICE data drawn on the same surveys, indicate that roughly 43% of households in the county experience limited income constraints. The total population is approximately 947,430 to 966,629 residents; and

WHEREAS, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and related county demographic profiles, Prince George's County has approximately 154,100 residents aged 65 and older, making up roughly 15.9% of the total county population; and

WHEREAS, the utility shut-off moratorium would apply to households with seniors aged 65 years and older; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for the creation of a formal emergency shutoff halt authority for rapid response during crises. This policy would authorize the Maryland Public Service Commission, in coordination with the Governor's Office, to temporarily suspend utility terminations during declared emergencies, including extreme weather events, public health crises, or disruptions in federal or state assistance funding; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to establish or strengthen seasonal shutoff protections to prevent service loss during extreme weather periods. This framework would include two protection cycles: Cycle 1 [(December 1 – March 31)] January 1 – February 28 and Cycle 2 [(April 1 – November 30)] June 1 – August 31; [Eligible residents may elect the cycle that best aligns with their household needs;] and

WHEREAS, there is a need to require post-moratorium payment stabilization measures by mandating that utility providers automatically enroll eligible households into a 12-month payment plan following the end of a moratorium period, including reduced or waived late fees; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to prohibit utility shutoffs for seniors and medically vulnerable residents who rely on electricity for life-sustaining medical equipment or have pre-existing health conditions that could be exacerbated by a loss of service, such as heat-related illnesses or respiratory conditions (e.g., asthma); and

WHEREAS, there is a need to implement performance-based debt relief or forgiveness programs to address accumulated balances. If a resident remains current on payments throughout the full 12-month repayment period, a portion or all of the arrears accrued during the moratorium may be forgiven.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of Prince George's County, Maryland, that the County Council requests that the Maryland Public Service Commission initiate a [three-month moratorium on all utility price increases] utility shut-off moratorium from January 1 to February 28 and from June 1 through August 31, for low- and moderate-income households, certain senior households, and households with persons with certain medical conditions in Prince George's County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon commencement of the utility shut-off moratorium [three-month moratorium], the County Council of Prince George's County, Maryland, requests that the Maryland Public Service Commission study patterns of utility use and associated customer costs to determine whether further pausing of shut offs is necessary in Prince George's County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED there is a need to continue to assess the role of data centers in the PJM regional network on rates and usage and related issues in Prince George's County and Statewide and to seek further input of the Maryland Public Service Commission and the Maryland Office of People's Counsel regarding data centers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Council of Prince George's County, Maryland, requests that the Maryland Public Service Commission partner with Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection (PJM) [to] conduct a comprehensive review of policy mechanisms that may lower utility rates that directly affect customers in Prince George's County and the State of Maryland.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the need for the creation of a formal emergency shutoff halt authority for rapid response during crises, the need to establish or strengthen seasonal shutoff protections, the need to require post-moratorium payment stabilization measures, the need to prohibit utility shutoffs for seniors and medically vulnerable residents who rely on electricity for life-sustaining medical equipment or have pre-existing health conditions that could be exacerbated by a loss of service, and the need to implement performance-based debt relief or forgiveness programs to address accumulated balances should be addressed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Council shall transmit a copy of this Resolution to the Chair of the Maryland Public Service Commission and the Office of the People's Counsel.

Adopted this 20th day of October, 2026.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

BY: _____
Krystal Oriadha
Chair

ATTEST:

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Donna J. Brown
Clerk of the Council