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September 9, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Will Seuffert
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E, Suite 350
St. Paul MN 55101

Re: In the Matter of the Inquiry into Actions by Electric and Natural Gas Utilities in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency

Docket No. E,G-999/CI-20-375

Dear Mr. Sueffert,

Minnesota Housing is implementing the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program, operating as RentHelpMN. The agency received an allocation of \$289 million from the federal government in January 2021 and is expected to receive an additional \$229 million. The funding is currently being used for past due rent and utilities. Eligible applicants include renter households with incomes at or below 80% area median income (AMI) and who have experienced financial hardship through the COVID-19 outbreak and can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

As of August 26, 2021, renters have submitted applications for nearly \$14 million in electric, gas and bulk fuel costs. Two-thirds of applicants have extremely low incomes.

Given the opportunity to help low-income renters pay their past due energy costs, I'm requesting that the Public Utilities Commission modify Order Point 5 from May 26, 2021 to include the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance program as a listed program alongside LIHEAP/EAP prohibiting disconnections of customers with past due balances who have a pending application or have been deemed eligible for assistance for the duration of the transition period (April 30, 2022).

Thank for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Ho".

Jennifer Leimaile Ho
Commissioner, Minnesota Housing