



Media Release

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PUC APPROVES DEADLINE EXTENSION TO CONTINUE OFFERING HIGHER SUBSIDIES ON TELEPHONE OR BROADBAND SERVICE FOR LOW-INCOME OREGONIANS

SALEM, Ore. – In June 2020, the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) was allocated \$3.5 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars for the Oregon Lifeline Program to temporarily increase the discount on telephone or high-speed internet service for eligible low-income households, which expired December 30, 2020. Yesterday, the PUC approved to extend the deadline to continue offering substantial discounts through June 30, 2021.

“The decision to extend the increased subsidy to benefit those experiencing financial hardships due the pandemic was an easy one,” said Megan Decker, PUC Chair. “These funds lessen the burden on low-income Oregonians, and provides them an affordable option to retain voice or broadband internet service to keep them connected to family, friends, and resources.”

Oregon Lifeline, a federal and state government program, typically provides a \$7 per month discount for telephone or high-speed internet service with participating companies. Through June 2021, qualifying Oregonians can receive a discount of \$12 per month, a more than 70 percent increase in the subsidy.

Oregonians receiving benefits from select public assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Medicaid may qualify. Residents may also qualify if their total household income is at or below 135 percent of federal poverty guidelines.

For additional information about the Oregon Lifeline program or to request an application, call 800-848-4442, weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., email at puc.rspf@state.or.us or visit www.lifeline.oregon.gov.

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The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) regulates customer rates and services of the state’s investor-owned electric, natural gas and telephone utilities, as well as select water companies. The PUC mission is to ensure Oregon utility customers have access to safe, reliable, and high quality utility services at just and reasonable rates, which is accomplished through thorough analysis and independent decision-making conducted in an open and fair process.