

David Whitaker, Esq.  
Director  
Irvin Corley, Jr.  
Executive Policy Manager  
Marcell R. Todd, Jr.  
Director, City Planning Commission  
Janese Chapman  
Director, Historic Designation  
Advisory Board

# City of Detroit


## CITY COUNCIL

LEGISLATIVE POLICY DIVISION  
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
Detroit, Michigan 48226  
Phone: (313) 224-4946 Fax: (313) 224-4336

Derrick Headd  
Marcel Hurt, Esq.  
Kimani Jeffrey  
Edward King  
Jamie Murphy  
Kim Newby  
Analine Powers, Ph.D.  
Laurie Anne Sabatini  
Rebecca Savage  
Ryan Schumaker  
Sabrina Shockley  
Renee Short  
Thomas Stephens, Esq.  
Timarie Szwed  
Dr. Sheryl Theriot  
Theresa Thomas  
Ashley A. Wilson

John Alexander  
Roland Amarteifio  
Megha Bamola  
LaKisha Barclift, Esq.  
Nur Barre  
Paige Blessman  
M. Rory Bolger, Ph.D., FAICP  
Eric Fazzini  
Christopher Gulock, AICP

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: David Whitaker, Director   
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: March 23, 2022

RE: **RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT DTE RESTORE ITS UTILITY  
SHUT-OFF MORATORIUM FOR ONE YEAR**

Council member Angela Whitfield-Calloway requested that the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) draft a RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT DTE RESTORE ITS UTILITY SHUT-OFF MORATORIUM FOR ONE YEAR.

Attached, please find our draft of the aforementioned resolution.

Attachment

**BY COUNCIL MEMBER ANGELA WHITFIELD-CALLOWAY**

**RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT DTE RESTORE ITS UTILITY SHUT-OFF MORATORIUM FOR ONE YEAR**

**WHEREAS,** The mission of the Detroit City Council is to promote the economic, cultural and physical welfare of Detroit’s citizens through Charter-mandated legislative functions; and

**WHEREAS,** According to news accounts, when the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, causing a wave of medical and financial hardship, 34 states directed utilities to stop shutting off customers’ service, according to the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. However, Michigan was not one of those, relying instead on voluntary suspensions by the state’s utilities; and

**WHEREAS,** During the pandemic, DTE discontinued the kiosk option of payment from several public locations and government buildings, including CAYMC (Coleman A. Young Municipal Center), which, during these time of unreliable mail delivery and sketchy web connections, severely curtails the ability of many of its customers to easily pay their bills; and

**WHEREAS,** DTE’s self-imposed three-month shut-off moratorium was shorter than those put in place by the largest utilities in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) chair Dan Scripps defended DTE’s decision, stating that people who stop paying their bills during a longer moratorium might be unlikely to ever catch up; and

**WHEREAS,** According to published reports, during the pandemic, DTE’s rate of electricity shut-offs — disconnections as a proportion of customers — outpaced the six other utilities in Michigan that are owned by private investors and have their prices regulated by the state. DTE’s rate was twice as high as the state’s second largest utility, Consumers Energy, which serves areas with a similar share of low-income residents, according to an analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data; and

**WHEREAS,** Conversely, Consumers Energy voluntarily extended its shut-off moratorium to eight months for most residential customers, through October 2020. The longer moratorium did not lead to more shut-offs once it ended, according to data filed by the company with the MPSC. Consumers indicated it did the right thing for its customers in an email to a news outlet stating: “We believe our approach was the right one...as we did not want to add additional stress onto our customers during an already stressful time;” and

**WHEREAS,** Analysis by ProPublica and Outlier found that from April 2020 through December 2021, the last month for which data is available, DTE disconnected accounts

208,000 times for nonpayment. These reports contain numbers for both residential and commercial disconnections, but the preponderance are residential;<sup>1</sup> and

**WHEREAS,** Federal data shows that DTE’s price, as measured in cost per kilowatt-hour, is the second highest among investor-owned utilities in Michigan, behind the Upper Peninsula Power Company, a utility with only about 50,000 customers in Northern Michigan. Consumers’ rate, meanwhile, is about 10% lower than DTE’s. DTE’s price per kilowatt-hour is also higher than the price charged by the largest utility in each of the other Great Lakes states of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin; and

**WHEREAS,** DTE’s price per kilowatt-hour is also higher than the price charged by the largest utility in each of the other Great Lakes states of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin, according to news sources. In view of this data, the Detroit City Council extends an invitation to meet with the leaders of DTE at a mutual agreeable date and time, to discuss the company’s rates; **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED,** That the Detroit City Council respectfully requests that DTE restores its moratorium of utility shut-offs for one year, given the lasting economic impacts of the pandemic, thereby giving its customers relief; **BE IT FURTHER**

**RESOLVED,** That the Detroit City Clerk is directed to send this resolution to DTE’s Board of Directors, DTE’s President and Chief Operating Officer and the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC), and to post and distribute copies of the resolution widely publicly and electronically.

---

<sup>1</sup> Lights out: Profitable Michigan utility shut off electricity to homes hundreds of thousands of times  
<https://energynews.us/2022/03/22/lights-out-profitable-michigan-utility-shut-off-electricity-to-homes-hundreds-of-thousands-of-times/>