

From: [John Howat](#)
To: [EIA112](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Form EIA-112 Comments
Date: Monday, August 19, 2024 5:26:45 PM
Attachments: [NCLC-EIA-Comments.pdf](#)

Dear Mr. Harnish,
Attached please find the Comment of National Consumer Law Center and "Consumer Commenters" regarding Form EIA-112. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions about this Comment.
Best wishes,

John Howat
Senior Policy Analyst
National Consumer Law Center®
7 Winthrop Square, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02110
617/542-8010; mobile 617-212-9664
www.nclc.org



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From: [EIA112](#)
To: [John Howat](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Form EIA-112 Comments
Date: Tuesday, September 10, 2024 10:32:00 AM

John,

Thank you for submitting a comment on the *Residential Utility Disconnections Survey*.

Congress tasked the U.S. Energy Information Administration with determining if collecting disconnection data from natural gas and electric utilities is feasible. We will invite utilities of various ownership types (investor-owned, municipal, cooperative, etc.) to complete the survey. We performed extensive pretesting to see which data we could reasonably collect and at what level of detail. We determined that we can collect the data annually, at the monthly level, without undue burden to the utilities. We also determined that data collected at the state level, by utility, to be the most effective geographic increment. We plan to publish data at the utility level and aggregate it to the state, census division, and national levels.

During the pretesting, we did not ask questions about the average length of time for reconnection or about accounts referred to debt collection companies. If approved, this survey will be valid for the usual three-year period, at which time, we will resubmit the survey to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for another approval. For future cycles of this survey, we can consider adding more questions to the extent that:

- Pretesting supports them
- They are of interest to the public
- They are within scope and achievable given resource constraints and respondent burden

Assuming OMB approves the survey, we will start collecting the disconnection data for 2024 in early 2025.

Marc Harnish

From: John Howat <jhowat@nclc.org>
Sent: Monday, August 19, 2024 5:22 PM
To: EIA112 <EIA112@eia.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Form EIA-112 Comments

Dear Mr. Harnish,
Attached please find the Comment of National Consumer Law Center and "Consumer Commenters" regarding Form EIA-112. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions about this Comment.

Best wishes,

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From: [EIA112](#)
To: [Meg Power](#)
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] comment on proposed survey [in the email body]
Date: Tuesday, September 10, 2024 10:33:00 AM

Meg,

Thank you for submitting a comment on the *Residential Utility Disconnections Survey*.

Congress tasked the U.S. Energy Information Administration with determining if collecting disconnection data from natural gas and electric utilities is feasible. We will invite utilities of various ownership types (investor-owned, municipal, cooperative, etc.) to complete the survey. We performed extensive pretesting to see which data we could reasonably collect and at what level of detail. We determined that we can collect the data annually, at the monthly level, without undue burden to the utilities. We also determined that data collected at the state level, by utility, to be the most effective geographic increment. We plan to publish data at the utility level and aggregate it to the state, census division, and national levels.

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- Pretesting supports them
- They are of interest to the public
- They are within scope and achievable given resource constraints and respondent burden

Assuming OMB approves the survey, we will start collecting the disconnection data for 2024 in early 2025.

Marc Harnish

From: Meg Power <megpower@ncaf.org>
Sent: Monday, August 19, 2024 3:45 PM
To: EIA112 <EIA112@eia.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] comment on proposed survey [in the email body]

Comment on proposed EIA form 112
David A Bradley,
Executive Director
National Community Action Foundation,
400 No.Capitol ST, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001

I write in strong support of the proposed utility disconnection annual survey on behalf of our members, more than 1000 community-based Community Action Partnerships.

‘CAPs’ are the non-profit and public organizations that, since 1964, have been charged with providing opportunity and a hand up to Americans lifting themselves out of poverty. Collectively, they directly deliver about a third of the federal LIHEAP program and 80% of the Weatherization Assistance program. They also manage many other federal, state and private investments, including utility programs, to help struggling families and retirees achieve stability and upward mobility.

Question A: Is the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of agency functions, including whether the information will have a practical [use]

It is important information for the Department of Energy, for the Department of Health and Human Services and for state and local governments, especially regulators.

Utility disconnection is a major crisis for customers unable to pay; some states have established realistic policies that limit utility collection schedules to a plan low-income families can afford. Community Action leaders typically join their consumer protection allies at PUCs and legislatures to advocate for these model policies; then their community teams implement the protections – such as they may be- in conjunction with the bill assistance and other family supports. Most states do not have either disconnection nor debt collection regulations that keep utilities connected to all who are disconnected. LIHEAP benefits are too limited for some repayment requirements.

Since a home without utilities is not habitable, the disconnected customer faces homelessness, loss of their household goods, disruption of school attendance and high barriers to re-establishing a permanent residence because of the credit impact of the disconnection.

It is extremely difficult for our local leaders to make the case for collection policies that treat both the supplier and the low-income customer fairly because the scope of the disconnection problem is unknown. The EIA’s own Residential Consumption Survey has devoted resources to collecting data from householders on the number, seasonality and duration of household disconnections; the data prove the existence of significant long-lasting loss of service and beg the question of which jurisdictions have higher or lower incidence .

The RECS results are dramatic with respect to the regional and racial differences among the populations that endure long disconnection and other customers. ^[1] As cited by the Consumer Commenters in their response, well-founded racial and economic justice concerns call for this timely addition to EIA information. And more.

Question C: Can EIA improve the quality, utility, and clarity of the information it will collect?

Yes. NCAF joins the Consumer Commenters in urging that EIA’s proposed survey template be modified to include monthly service territory level (rather than zip code level) reporting of the average duration of involuntary disconnections, number and dollar value of residential accounts past due by more than 30 days, the number of new deferred payment agreements entered into, and the number of successfully completed payment agreements.

At the national level, I am certain our members and I will be able to explain to the appropriate budgeteers the need for resources to make this survey geographically applicable and appropriately detailed.

At the community and state level, our network of LIHEAP organizations will have the

information needed to plan a response commensurate with the scale of disconnections in the utility territories they serve, to introduce best practices to utility leadership and to root out racial injustices by addressing the pattern of utility disconnection.

Note: We have no opinion on the options for information collection nor on burden. I want to re-emphasize, however, the great benefit to be realized from this uniquely valuable information about residential energy customer crises and their location and scale.

The Department's willingness to collect this information is a dramatic demonstration of this Administration's commitment to Energy Justice and to the hard work and open-mindedness of the EIA leaders. The men and women on the proverbial "front line" of fighting energy poverty are impressed by, and grateful for, your commitment to this initiative.

[\[1\]](https://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/data/2015/index.php?view=microdata) U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, 2015 Residential Energy Consumption Survey microdata (<https://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/data/2015/index.php?view=microdata>)

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