

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:  
TRACE SCRUGGS, (202) 508-5229**

## **Utilities United Against Scams Recognizes Fifth Annual Utility Scam Awareness Day on November 18**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 16, 2020)** – Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS) will recognize the fifth annual Utility Scam Awareness Day on Wednesday, November 18. Utility Scam Awareness Day is part of the week-long International Scam Awareness Week, an advocacy and awareness campaign focused on educating customers and exposing the tactics used by scammers.

UUAS, a consortium of more than 145 U.S. and Canadian electric, water, and natural gas utilities and their respective trade associations, continues to create customer awareness of common scams and new scam tactics being used during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through its work and with the help of customer reporting, UUAS has succeeded in taking nearly 9,500 toll-free numbers used by scammers against utility customers out of operation.

“It is no surprise that scammers have been seeking to exploit the heightened anxiety of people coping with the pandemic,” said UUAS Founder and Executive Committee Chairman Jared Lawrence. “I am proud to report that UUAS’ education efforts and utilities’ well-publicized customer testimonials have prevented a drastic increase in victims. However, the relentless attempts by these criminals make it clear that we must continue to actively work to protect our customers and to keep scammers from casting confusion on our pandemic recovery messages.”

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, scammers have increased calls, texts, emails, and in-person tactics and are contacting utility customers asking for immediate payment to avoid service disconnection. As a reminder, utilities will never send a single notification to a customer within one hour of a service interruption, and they will never ask their customers to make payments with a pre-paid debit card, gift card, any form of cryptocurrency, or third-party digital payment mobile applications.

“Customers need to be on high alert as we continue to see impostor utility scams rise across North America,” said UUAS Executive Director Monica Martinez. “Scammers demand money or personal information on the spot—usually with threatening language—and indicate that service will be disconnected immediately. Anyone and everyone, from senior households to small business owners, is at risk of being targeted.”

Customers who suspect that they have been victims of fraud or who feel threatened during contact with a scammer should contact their local utility company or law enforcement authorities. The Federal Trade Commission’s [website](#) also provides additional information about protecting personal information and other information regarding impostor scams.

Visit [www.utilitiesunited.org](http://www.utilitiesunited.org) for more information and tips on how customers can protect themselves from impostor utility scams, and follow along with UUAS on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

###

*Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS) is a consortium of more than 145 U.S. and Canadian electric, water, and natural gas utilities and their respective trade associations. UUAS is dedicated to combating impostor utility scams by providing a forum for utilities and trade associations to share data and best practices, in addition to working together to implement initiatives to inform and protect customers.*