



Louisiana Public Service Commission

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MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Scams targeting utility customers

The Public Service Commission has been alerted to different scams targeting utility customers.

One of the scams involves utility customers receiving texts, e-mails, or just by word of mouth that the federal government is paying their utility bill, either through government assistance or from a BP grant. The customer is directed to a banking routing number after giving their social security number and other personal information. The payment appears to go through but is later rejected because the routing number is not legitimate. Pointe Coupee Electric contacted the Commission stating that some of their customers have supplied their information through this system. Unfortunately, the payments will not be accepted causing potential late fees and other charges.

Entergy contacted the Commission about a scam involving individuals going door-to-door with laptops claiming their utility bills will be paid through "Bill Matrix". Although Bill Matrix is a legitimate bill payment company, they do not send representatives to a potential customer's home. After the customer gives these individuals their social security number and other personal information, a routing number is given to the customer. The routing number is not legitimate and the customer's utility bill will not be paid leading to potential late fees and other charges. Entergy has confirmed approximately 150 accounts have been related to this scam, including many in the Baton Rouge and New Orleans area.

“Unfortunately, this is another example of scam artists taking advantage of consumers. With respect to utility payments made by third parties, consumers should check with their utility company or the office of their respective Public Service Commissioner in order to verify the legitimacy of the payment program,” stated Commissioner Field.

Commissioner Lambert Boissiere of New Orleans added “As commissioners, we are, first and foremost, concerned about the safety of our constituents. If anyone approaches you requesting your personal information, please verify their identity prior to sharing yours. Beware, be safe and be smart and let us know how we can help.”

Commissioner Eric Skrmetta of Metairie has been assisting the proper authorities but needs the public’s help in identifying these perpetrators. “I have spoken with local, state and federal authorities about these issues, and am assured investigators are giving these crimes the serious attention they deserve,” said Commissioner Skrmetta. “Part of our duty to protect consumers includes preventing scams such as these and working swiftly to eliminate them when they arise. We need the public's help to stop these criminals.”

Please contact your Commissioner’s district office or our main office in Baton Rouge if you have any questions about this troubling issue.

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