

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Prohibiting Cable and Telecommunications Providers from Terminating Internet and Voice Service

04/13/2020

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed Executive Order No. 126 (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-126.pdf>), prohibiting cable and telecommunications providers from terminating Internet and voice service due to nonpayment until 30 days after the current public health emergency has ended. The order also mandates that all service downgrades, service reductions, or late fees due to nonpayment are prohibited unless they are imposed in accordance with a policy approved by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. Additionally, any Internet or voice service that was disconnected after March 16 due to nonpayment must be reconnected.

“Most of our service providers voluntarily took these steps, in accordance with FCC policy, to protect their customers during this difficult time, and we are grateful for their partnership,” **said Governor Murphy**. “However, these policies have been implemented inconsistently among companies, so today we are prohibiting the termination of Internet and voice services due to nonpayment during this time. Our children need Internet access for remote learning, our workforce needs the resources to telework, and families need to be able to keep each other informed. It is critical for our New Jersey residents to maintain these connections and not have their ability to communicate with the outside world severed.”

“Thank you, Governor Murphy for issuing this order to ensure that residents will have access to internet and phone service during this crisis,” **said Joseph L. Fiordaliso, President of the Board of Public Utilities**. “I would like to again thank all of the electric and gas utilities and our water companies for their continued cooperation in voluntarily suspending all shut-offs and trying to help folks get through this very difficult situation. It is important that we all work together in a spirit of good citizenship during this unusual time.”

Governor Murphy’s executive order directs the following:

- No cable or telecommunications provider that provides residential internet and voice services to New Jersey residents shall terminate such internet and voice service due to nonpayment as long as this Order remains in effect.
- A cable or telecommunications provider that provides residential internet and voice services to New Jersey residents may downgrade or otherwise reduce the quality of residential internet or voice services provided due to nonpayment only if acting pursuant to a policy approved in writing by the Board of Public Utilities as long as this Order remains in effect.

 Back to top

- A cable or telecommunications provider that provides residential internet and voice services to New Jersey residents may collect 1) a fee or charge imposed for late or otherwise untimely payments that become due from the date of this Order for residential internet or 2) a fee or charge imposed for voice service reconnections, other than what is described below, only if acting pursuant to a policy approved in writing by the Board of Public Utilities as long as this Order remains in effect.
- Any cable or telecommunications provider that provides residential internet and voice services to New Jersey residents shall, upon request of the customer, and at no cost to the customer beyond any actual costs incurred by the provider in reconnecting the service, reconnect any residential internet or voice service that was discontinued due to nonpayment after March 16, 2020, including where the disconnection was for unpaid bills incurred prior to March 16, 2020.

The order will take effect immediately and remain in effect until 30 days following the end of the public health emergency.

For a copy of Executive Order No. 126, click here (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-126.pdf>).

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

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[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

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[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

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[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html\)](/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](/governor/news/appointments)

[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation](#)

[\(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

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