

Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe

P.O. Box 283 Flandreau, SD 57028

Ph. 605-997-3891

Fax 605-997-3878

www.santeesioux.com

April 1, 2020



Sent Via Electronic and First Class U.S. Mail

Alderman Donald Whitman
1006 S. Wind Street
Flandreau, SD 57028
whitmandonald1@gmail.com

RE: Disconnection of City Utilities during COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Alderman Whitman:

The Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe respectfully requests that all City of Flandreau Utility Services, including Electric, Water, Sewer, and Garbage, not be terminated during the COVID-19 Pandemic for a period of at least three months.

The COVID-Pandemic has caused additional strain on Tribal Members, Tribal Employees, and community members. With schools closed, lack of available daycare, and employee layoffs, the burden on the community has transitioned from merely getting by during the crisis, to prioritizing available cash to feed families and provide basic needs. A three month period in which individuals would not face disconnections, and a reasonable time period to catch up on payments, would provide much needed security to the community.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having an especially large impact on the Flandreau Santee Sioux Reservation. On March 31, 2020 at 11:59 P.M., the Tribe closed the Royal River Casino and Hotel to the public, and then furloughed around 225 employees. The Tribe also had to furlough additional governmental employees to continue to operate, and provide limited services to the tribal community. As one of the largest employers in the county, these employees will need time to apply for Reemployment Insurance, and to receive other aid that may be coming from the Coronavirus Stimulus Packages. A break on utility terminations would lessen this impact.

The suspension of disconnections for those who truly need the help benefits the community as a whole. The City of Sioux Falls, NorthWestern Energy, Black Hills Corporation, and other service providers and municipalities have taken similar action, and the Tribe therefore respectfully request that the City of Flandreau do the same.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read 'Anthony Reider', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Anthony Reider,
Tribal President

cc: Jeff Peterson, Administrator, City of Flandreau

Corey Bruning, Attorney, City of Flandreau