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## **Utilities United Against Scams to Recognize Eighth Annual Utility Scam Awareness Day on November 15**

**WASHINGTON (November 13, 2023)** – Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS) this week will support International Fraud Awareness Week and recognize the eighth annual Utility Scam Awareness Day on Wednesday, November 15. Utility Scam Awareness Day is an advocacy and awareness campaign focused on educating customers and exposing scammer tactics.

In recent years, utilities have seen increased reports of their customers being contacted by scammers who pose as utility workers in an attempt to access their financial information or to obtain immediate payment by threatening service interruptions. These are known as utility impostor scams. The theme of this year’s campaign is “Screen the Search,” which reflects the rise in utility impostor scams through digital methods, including search engine-related scams.

UUAS, a consortium of more than 150 U.S. and Canadian electric, water, and natural gas utilities and their respective trade associations, continues to raise customer awareness of common scams and new scam tactics used by utility impostors. Through its work and with the help of customer reporting, UUAS has successfully helped to take more than 14,020 toll-free numbers used by scammers against utility customers out of operation.

“Utility impostor scammers continue to grow more sophisticated in their tactics. Increasingly, we are seeing scammers use digital methods that target both younger and older generations. We encourage customers to stop and verify any unusual utility company requests before making a payment, regardless of whether the customer is contacted via phone, internet, or in person,” said UUAS Executive Director Monica Martinez.

Digital scam tactics that customers should be aware of include:

- Sponsored ads on search engines that lead to an identical—but fake—utility bill payment page
- QR codes that scammers falsely claim link to a utility payment page
- Texts from a scammer claiming to be a utility representative, with a link to an impostor payment page

“Together, utilities are working to combat scammers by spreading awareness and partnering with telecom providers to remove access to phone lines for reported scammers. As always, we encourage policymakers to adopt stronger public protections and encourage private citizens and small businesses to stay vigilant against scams,” said UUAS Chair and Kissimmee Utility Authority Manager of Customer Service Bud Ajdukovic.

As a reminder, utilities will never ask for payments using a pre-paid debit card, gift card, cryptocurrencies, or third-party digital payment mobile applications, and they will provide

multiple notices before any service interruptions are implemented.

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 their local law enforcement authorities. The Federal Trade Commission also provides additional information about protecting personal information and other information regarding impostor scams.

Visit [www.utilitiesunited.org](http://www.utilitiesunited.org) for information and tips on how customers can protect themselves from impostor utility scams. Follow along with UUAS on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), and join the conversation by using #StopScams.

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*Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS) is a consortium of more than 150 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.*