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Media Advisory-for immediate release

No disconnections during COVID-19 crisis, but fraudsters still trying to scam

(Sudbury,ON)- It seems like a monthly message, but fraudsters are again trying to take advantage of people...even during this COVID situation. Greater Sudbury Utilities has received reports again today from customers reporting another attempted disconnection scam, which has been making the rounds in Ontario.

The callers threaten immediate disconnection of electricity if money is not paid within a half-hour. At least two of the customers who reported the attempts had enrolled in pre-authorized payment, and called the GSU office to find out if there was something wrong with their account.

"We urge customers to always be on the alert for fraudulent phone calls," said Wendy Watson, Director of Communications for Greater Sudbury Utilities. "Right now, we have stopped all disconnections for non-payment while the COVID crisis continues. We do still send written notices to overdue accounts, and we encourage people to try to keep their accounts as current as they are able, but we do NOT phone and threaten immediate disconnection."

Watson said the scammers are sometimes spoofing the GSU phone number, and sometimes using a toll-free number. They are verbally bullying and threatening the people they call.

"Do not give your information out over the phone. Always call the phone number on your bill and talk with your service provider about your account. NEVER call a phone number, toll-free or otherwise, that a caller gives you," said Watson. "Even though our office is closed to public traffic, our staff are ready to take customer calls. This is also a great time to register for secure 24/7 account access through our "My Account" portal on our websites www.gsuinc.ca and www.sudburyhydro.com. "

If you have questions about your account, call Greater Sudbury Utilities directly at 705-675-7536. If you are the victim of a fraud or attempted fraud, please contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre 1-888-495-8501.

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For more information, please contact Wendy Watson, Director of Communications Officer, 705-675-0511 or wendy.watson@gsuinc.ca.

