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*Keystone Alliance to*  
**Stop Utility Imposters**

## **PENNSYLVANIA UTILITIES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITE TO FIGHT UTILITY IMPOSTERS**

*House Resolution Designates “Utility Imposter Awareness Week” Across the Commonwealth*

**HARRISBURG, PA. (June 1, 2015)** – Today, the Keystone Alliance to Stop Utility Imposters, a coalition of local water, gas and electric utilities, announced that it has joined forces with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association and Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association to launch a public awareness campaign about criminals impersonating utility workers to gain access and rob homeowners.

Members of the Keystone Alliance to Stop Utility Imposters joined State Representative Mike Regan (R-York) at a Capitol Rotunda news conference to announce House Resolution 341 declaring the week of June 8-12, 2015, as “Utility Imposter Awareness Week” in Pennsylvania.

“Sadly, the number of incidents of imposters posing as legitimate utility workers is increasing, and House Resolution 341 calls attention to this reprehensible activity,” said Regan. “I support the Keystone Alliance and their efforts to help others from being victimized.”

Across Pennsylvania, thieves have gained access to residents’ homes by posing as utility workers. Once inside the home, the imposters typically divert the resident’s attention by sending him/her to another floor while they or an accomplice robs the home. The Keystone Alliance to Stop Utility Imposters formed to educate consumers on how to protect themselves via a new public awareness campaign with print, broadcast and online media advertisements.

“The PUC shares the concerns of utility providers and law enforcement, and supports the need for greater consumer awareness about utility worker imposters,” said PUC Commissioner Pamela A. Witmer. “We are happy to join the participating utilities in this important effort as they strengthen their outreach on safety and continue to build strong relationships with their customers.”

At the news conference, the Keystone Alliance to Stop Utility Imposters unveiled its media campaign aimed at informing consumers about the illicit practices of utility imposters. For example, the coalition’s ads inform customers that impersonators are not easy to spot. Homeowners are advised that before letting any worker into their house to always check for a company-issued photo ID.

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“It is extremely rare for a utility employee to show up at a customer’s home without an appointment. However, if someone comes to your door claiming to be from the local utility and you are not expecting them, do not let them inside without proper identification,” said Louise Knight, chairperson, Pennsylvania Chapter of National Association of Water Companies.

“These criminals typically prey on seniors and use a variety of excuses to enter and steal from the home. But if homeowners know what to look for and how to protect themselves, we can not only prevent this crime but also catch and prosecute these thieves to the fullest extent of the law,” said David J. Freed, Cumberland County District Attorney.

“The safety of our customers is the number one priority of Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania,” said Communications Manager Russell Bedell, “and as part of the Energy Association of Pennsylvania, we fully support the Alliance’s efforts to protect and educate homeowners.”

The coalition’s campaign materials were designed by Meinert/Mashek, a Pittsburgh-based agency. In addition to television and radio public service announcements, the member utilities will distribute the newly created communications tools among their customers to raise awareness.

“We’re glad to be part of this alliance and help alert homeowners about these imposter schemes. Take the time to examine the ID badge whenever someone from a utility company arrives at your home. Be safe, stay vigilant and if you have any suspicions about the individual’s identity, call 9-1-1 immediately,” said Dane Merryman, executive director, Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association.

“We support this effort. Customer safety is paramount,” said Christopher Cardenas, PPL Electric Utilities’ customer services vice president. “Virtually all visits to customer homes by our employees or contractors are prearranged with the customer and proper identification is always worn. We advise customers to check with us if there are any questions at all. “

Cardenas said the resolution also should serve to highlight the issue of phone scams. In those cases, thieves target customers with a false claim the customer is behind on their bill and will have service shut off if an immediate payment is not made with a pre-paid debit card.

#### About the Keystone Alliance to Stop Utility Imposters

The Keystone Alliance to Stop Utility Imposters is a coalition of water, electric and gas utilities working with the PUC and law enforcement to protect its customers from the threat of utility worker imposters. Utility members are the Energy Association of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Chapter of National Association of Water Companies, Aqua Pennsylvania, Capital Region Water, Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority and North Penn Water Authority.

#### About the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission balances the needs of consumers and utilities; ensures safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protects the public interest; educates consumers to make independent and informed utility choices; furthers economic development; and fosters new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner.

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