



**Stoughton Utilities**

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*Serving Electric, Water & Wastewater Since 1886*

# News Release

## Stoughton Utilities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Stoughton Utilities urges customers to beware of identity theft scam**

Stoughton Utilities is alerting customers to beware of a fraudulent scheme claiming to offer help with utility bill payments.

The identity theft scam—sometimes pitched as a ‘bailout’ authorized by President Barack Obama's administration—has been reported by utility companies and their customers in states around the nation. The fraudulent offer, which is known to be distributed by methods including email, social media, phone calls or door-to-door visits, promises that a federal government program is available to help pay utility customers’ bills. In some cases, the scammers claim to represent a local utility.

Victims of the fake offer are asked to provide a social security number, credit card or banking information to enroll in the non-existent program, after which they are provided fraudulent bank account and routing numbers to use when paying their bills.

When the fraudulent payments are discovered and removed, the customer is left with an unpaid bill and the risk of late charges and potential service disruptions. In the meantime, the scammers have gained personal information about the victim that could be used for the purposes of identity theft.

Stoughton Utilities is not aware of any such fraudulent activity in our community at this time, but is proactively warning customers to beware of any such offers. Several hundred instances of the scam have been reported elsewhere in Wisconsin.

Stoughton Utilities encourages customers to never provide personal information that the utility company should already have, including your name, address, and utility account number. Utility employees will never ask for your social security number. Customers with doubts about any caller, on-line contact or

visitor claiming to represent Stoughton Utilities should contact the utility at (608) 873-3379 or at [CustomerService@stoughtonutilities.com](mailto:CustomerService@stoughtonutilities.com) for verification before providing personal banking information.

Anyone that believes they have been caught in this scam should call the Wisconsin Consumer Protection hotline at (608) 224-4953.

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