



CORONAVIRUS

# NWT Power Corporation to stop using limiters during pandemic

Ollie Williams - March 18, 2020

**The NWT Power Corporation has promised to disable all power-limiting equipment on residents' homes for the duration of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.**



A file photo of the NWT Power Corporation building in Hay River. Ollie Williams/Cabin

## Radio

**A**s first reported by the CBC at the start of this month, Nunakput MLA Jackie Jacobson had complained that some Arctic coastal community residents were having their power throttled – and cut off completely every 10 to 15 minutes.

The technology can be used by the power corporation on households that don't pay their bills within 28 days. The power comes on for up to a quarter of an hour, then is cut off again, then the cycle repeats.

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The corporation says it's better than cutting someone off entirely. Affected residents say the limiters mean they can't cook or adequately heat their homes in winter.

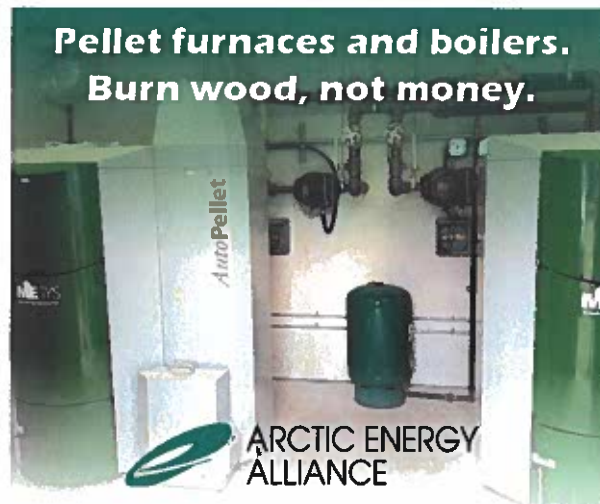
Jacobson initially said use of that limiting technology should be stopped in the NWT's cold winter months. This week, Jacobson added the same limiters could have dangerous consequences during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“I’m really worried about our communities, our Elders, people who we represent in our communities,” Jacobson said in the legislature on Monday.

“We really should think about this from now until June – take all limiters off. The minister could make that happen.”

Shane Thompson, the minister responsible for the power corporation, initially said he could not commit to removing limiters.

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However, in an email on Tuesday, Thompson said the corporation’s policy would now change – in part because local offices are closing.

Many NWT government staff are being told to work from home starting on Thursday. Customer service offices in Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, and Hay River were closed to visitors as of Tuesday, the email stated.

Thompson said closing government service offices would make it harder for customers to set up payment plans for their overdue bills.

“As a result of this new development, all limiters will be removed as quickly as practical to ensure no customers suffer undue hardship during the pandemic,” he wrote.

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