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Subject: BILL COLLECTION SCAM RESURFACES AGAIN
For Immediate Release:
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Customers Urged to Protect Credit Card Information from Con Artists

SEATTLE - Seattle City Light is urging its customers to be on guard against telephone con artists posing as utility bill collectors who appear to be targeting customers with Asian surnames.

In the past few days, several customers have reported phone calls from con artists claiming to be City Light employees.

In the scam, the callers claimed there were problems with payment of the customers' bills and demanded immediate credit card payments to resolve the matter. The con artists appear to be targeting customers with Asian-sounding surnames. This is similar to incidents reported to City Light over the past several years.

"It is unfortunate in these challenging economic times that some people try to take advantage of others with such scams," Customer Service Director Kelly Enright said. "Seattle City Light wants to help its customers protect themselves and the best way to do that is to be informed."

"If someone asks for your credit card number over the phone, don't give it to them," Enright said. "We do not call our customers demanding immediate payment to avoid a shutoff for one late payment."

If a customer is behind on his or her bill and at risk of having the power turned off, City Light sends at least two written warnings asking the customer to contact the utility directly to make a payment.

City Light also would like to remind customers:

- * Seattle City Light never asks customers over the telephone for credit card information to pay their bills.
- * Seattle City Light does not call customers on weekends.
- * Seattle City Light employees carry identification with the City Light logo and will always display it when asked.

All City Light customers are advised to take down the name and telephone number of anyone who calls and represents themselves as a City Light employee. Also, before customers provide any credit information, they should call City Light at 684-3000 to verify that the request is legitimate. If a customer believes he or she has been contacted by a con artist, they are urged to contact the Seattle Police Department at (206) 625-5011 to report the incident.

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