

PEARL RIVER, NY February 25, 2020 --- O&R customers are being hounded by a new round of persistent predatory phone calls today from phony bill collectors trying to steal their money.

The scheme goes this way: individuals posing as O&R employees call unsuspecting customers and threaten them with the immediate shut off of their electric service if they don't pay phony O&R bills with Green Dot or other prepaid debit cards.

**Here are two big reasons not to believe any crook who makes a shutoff threat:**

- **NO DEBIT CARDS** - O&R does not accept bill payment for electric and gas utility bills by Green Dot or any other prepaid debit cards. Never has.
- **NO IMMEDIATE SHUTOFF** - Disconnecting O&R electric or gas service for non-payment of bills involves a multi-step process – including written communications from O&R to the customer over a period of several days, or even weeks --- not hours. That process is regulated by the NYS Public Service Commission and NJ Board of Public Utilities.

So, if someone calls you, says they are an O&R employee and threatens to shut off your electric or gas service that day if not immediately paid through a prepaid debit card, here's what you should do:

- **Hang Up** – Disengage so you're not further subjected to the fraudulent high-pressure "sales pitch."
- **Text Trouble** – After you hang up on them, the more aggressive predatory callers will try to repeat their shutoff threat by texting you. Ignore the threat.
- **Don't Hit "REDIAL"** – The caller ID screen on your phone for the phony bill collector's call may read "Orange and Rockland Utilities", but that's a hi-tech bogus copy of the utility company's number. That's not O&R. Do not redial, and don't call the number that the caller gives you to call them back. That will reconnect you to the crook.
- **Fast Track** - If you are unsure about whether you have an overdue balance on your O&R bill, the fastest way to find out is to log onto your account through ORU.com. to review your latest account information. You also can call O&R's automated phone system at 1-877-434-4100. Have your Orange and Rockland account number ready and follow the automated phone prompts to check your balance.