

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1469

H. P. 1077

House of Representatives, March 11, 1971

Referred to Committee on Public Utilities. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

BERTHA W. JOHNSON, Clerk

Presented by Mrs. Goodwin of Bath.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-ONE

AN ACT Requiring a Reduced Rate of at Least 50% by Gas, Electric and Telephone Companies for Service to the Elderly.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows :

R. S., T. 35, §§ 72-73, additional. Title 35 of the Revised Statutes is amended by adding 2 new sections 72 and 73 to read as follows :

§ 72. Rates to the elderly

Purpose. It is declared that many elderly persons reside in the State whose annual net income from all sources is less than the amount necessary to enable them to maintain decent living conditions in the inflationary economy presently existing and whose income is fixed in whole or in part so as to be not adjusted to such an economy; that the provision of the services of public utilities, including gas, electric and telephone, at rates reduced from inflationary levels is a necessity of life for such persons so that they may be able to protect themselves from the adversities of old age by continuing to live in private or family units; that the lack of such services at such rates tends to cause an increase and spread of diseases, including communicable and chronic diseases, by depriving such persons of ample access to heating, cooking and emergency medical facilities; that such a condition aggravates those diseases and illnesses peculiar to the elderly, thereby crowding the hospitals and other institutions in the State with elderly persons under conditions of idleness that inevitably invite senility; that this situation constitutes a menace to the health, safety, welfare and comfort of the inhabitants of the State; that a public exigency exists which makes the provision of reduced rate services to the elderly by public utilities a public necessity; that the provision of such rates for the purpose of reducing the cost to the State of their maintenance

and care by promoting their health and welfare, thereby prolonging their productivity in the interest of the State and nation, constitutes and is declared to be a public purpose necessary for the preservation of the public convenience.

§ 73. Public utility service to the elderly

The Public Utilities Commission shall not approve rates or schedules for gas, electric and telephone companies unless such rates or schedules include provisions granting a reduced rate of at least 50% to persons qualifying under this chapter. No reduced rates shall be allowable under this chapter unless at least one male member of the household shall have attained the age of 65 or one female member the age of 62 and no less than 35% of the household income is attributable to such members of the household. No reduced rates shall be allowable if household income is in excess of \$4,000 annually. The commission shall adopt and, from time to time, review and, if necessary, modify procedures for the prompt, fair and efficient establishment and maintenance of such reduced rates and schedules by all gas, electric and telephone companies.

STATEMENT OF FACT

This Act would reduce the rate charged for service to the elderly for gas, electric and telephone services.