

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1663

H. P. 1361

House of Representatives, April 3, 1975

On motion of Mr. Bustin of Augusta, referred to the Committee on Public Utilities. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mrs. Mitchell of Vassalboro.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-FIVE

AN ACT Relating to Termination of Utility Service.

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

35 MRSA § 314 is enacted to read:

§ 314. Termination of utility services

1. Discontinuance upon nonpayment. No public utility shall disconnect or terminate the utilities of any unconsenting customer for nonpayment of a delinquent account less than 90 days from the date the customer has actual notice that his or her account is delinquent, or where the amount owing is less than \$50.

2. Notice. Prior to disconnecting or terminating a customer's utilities for nonpayment of a delinquent account, the utility must send the customer at least 2 notices which must contain the following information:

A. A statement that the account is a delinquent account which is to be paid promptly and that termination procedures will be initiated if the amount is not paid or if arrangement is not made to pay the amount under a deferred payment agreement;

B. A statement that the customer should communicate with the public utility's collections department, listing a telephone number, if he or she has any questions concerning the amount and a statement that the collections department will assist the customer in making arrangements to pay the amount under a deferred payment agreement;

C. A statement that residential utility service will be continued for up to 14 days during serious illness or a medical emergency if the customer sub-

mits a physician's statement that the termination of service will aggravate the infirmity;

D. A statement that the utility's business offices will be open on the day following the termination or the disconnection and that the termination or disconnection will not take place outside of normal business hours; and

E. A statement that the customer may have any dispute with the public utility reviewed by the Public Utilities Commission prior to any disconnection or termination and that the commission may make any order it deems appropriate pursuant to its powers under this Title. The final notice must be given to the customer not less than 7 days before the disconnection and be given by certified mail.

3. Imposition of additional standards. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the Public Utilities Commission from imposing such other standards as it may find necessary provided that such standards do not contradict those herein provided.

STATEMENT OF FACT

The purpose of this bill is to establish a uniform method for terminating utilities to customer for nonpayment. These procedures will, to the extent possible, assure that Maine consumers receive vital utilities and that arbitrary disconnections or terminations will not occur.