

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1317

H. P. 1093

House of Representatives, March 28, 1977

On motion of Mr. Kelleher of Bangor, referred to the Committee on Public Utilities. Sent up for concurrence and 2,000 copies ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Connolly of Portland.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-SEVEN

AN ACT to Provide Lifeline Electrical Services.

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

Sec. 1. 35 MRSA c. 4, as enacted by PL 1975, c. 585, § 1, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

CHAPTER 4

THE LIFELINE ELECTRICAL SERVICE ACT

§ 81. Title

This chapter shall be known as The Lifeline Electrical Service Act.

§ 82. Policy

It is declared that it is the policy of the State of Maine to insure an adequate electrical utility service to older and disabled citizens at a price they can afford. Older citizens and disabled citizens today face a special crisis in surviving under the constant increase in the cost of living and particularly in the cost of fuel and utility services. It is the purpose of lifeline electrical service to alleviate the upward spiral in the cost of electrical service to older citizens and disabled citizens, and at the same time encourage as well as reward the conservation of scarce energy supplies.

It is the policy of this State that residents be able to receive electrical service for basic necessities of modern life, such as lighting and refrigeration, at a stable, fair and reasonable minimum cost and to encourage the reduction of electrical power consumption for all other uses beyond such basic necessities.

§ 83. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following words shall have the following meanings.

1. Disabled citizen. "Disabled citizen" means a residential customer, including one who receives Social Security benefits including SSDI and SSI, or VA disability benefits.

2. Older citizen. "Older citizen" means a residential customer 62 years of age or older.

3. Residential customer. "Residential customer" means an individual customer of an electric utility who maintains a permanent place of abode within this State and is present in this State for more than in the aggregate 183 days each year.

§ 84. Lifeline rate

1. Rate. A residential customer who is an older citizen or a disabled citizen shall be charged the lifeline rate for all electricity used.

2. Computation. The lifeline rate shall be computed as follows:

A. For the first 500 kilowatt hours utilized each month, the lifeline rate shall be a flat per kilowatt hour rate which is determined by taking the applicable residential base bill amount for a monthly usage of 500 kilowatt hours, adding to it the average monthly fuel adjustment charge for the preceding calendar year and multiplying the sum by 75%;

B. For the rate block between 500 kilowatt hours and 1,000 kilowatt hours, electric utilities shall file a single rate which shall achieve equality in the base bill amount between residential service rates and lifeline service rates at a monthly usage level of 1,000 kilowatt hours;

C. If any residential customer eligible for the lifeline rate shall in any month utilize more than 1,000 kilowatt hours, he shall be billed at the regular applicable residential rate for all electricity used during that month; and

D. Each electric utility company shall annually recompute the lifeline rates described in paragraphs A and B by April 1st of each calendar year. The lifeline rate as so recomputed shall thenceforth be applied to all billing cycles commencing on or after April 1st of that calendar year.

3. Rate not supplemented by fuel adjustment charge. The rate provided in this section shall not be supplemented by the fuel adjustment charge or by any minimum charge for converting to the lifeline rate. Electric utility companies may charge a residential customer eligible for the lifeline rate for connecting or servicing of an electric meter.

§ 85. Eligibility

Each residential customer shall become eligible for the lifeline rate by providing the electric utility company with proof of age or disability.

§ 86. Rules and procedures

The Public Utilities Commission is empowered to establish any rules and procedures necessary for the implementation of this chapter.

Sec. 2. Transitional provisions. Each electric utility company shall file with the Public Utilities Commission tariffs in conformance with this Act within 30 days of the date this Act becomes effective. Tariffs under this Act shall be effective not later than 30 days from the date of filing by the utility company.

STATEMENT OF FACT

The purpose of this bill is to provide lifeline electrical services.