

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

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ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH LEGISLATURE

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**Legislative Document**

**No. 1444**

H. P. 1193

House of Representatives, March 26, 1979

On Motion of Mr. Davies of Orono, referred to the Committee on Public Utilities. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Davies of Orono.

Cosponsors: Mr. Connolly of Portland, Mr. Wyman of Pittsfield and Mr. Baker of Portland.

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STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED  
SEVENTY-NINE

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**AN ACT to Reduce the Minimum Public Utility Monthly Electrical Charge to \$2 and to Prohibit the use by Electrical Utilities of an Estimated Meter Reading as a Basis for a Customer Bill.**

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

35 MRSa §§ 96 and 97 are enacted to read:

**§ 96. Minimum monthly electrical charge**

The Public Utilities Commission shall not approve any monthly minimum customer charge of over \$2 to electric utility residential customers.

Electric utility residential customer charges shall be on a per meter basis regardless of the number of persons or families taking service on that meter.

**§ 97. Estimated meter reading**

No electrical utility may use an estimated meter reading as a basis for a customer bill, but the utility may use a meter reading provided by a customer as a basis for his bill.

## STATEMENT OF FACT

This bill establishes policies for electric utility monthly customer charges which encourage conservation and fairness.

A flat rate for residential electricity from the Central Maine Power Company was recently instituted by the Public Utilities Commission. At the same time, the Public Utilities Commission raised the Central Maine Power Company monthly customer charge from \$3.40 to \$5.70. This had the effect, because the small consumer now pays more regardless of use, of negating the conservation effect of the flat rate. By reducing the monthly charge, the per-kilowatt-hour charge will be raised. Thus, the more that is used, the more that will be paid.

The Public Utilities Commission now allows the Central Maine Power Company to conduct multiple billing. That is, if there are 4 families in a house but only one electric meter, the Central Maine Power Company may charge 4 monthly service charges to the customer. This policy is unfair to landlords and tenants; bears no relationship to costs of service; goes against the principle of conservation by raising the initial charge to the customer; and puts the electric utility into the business of defining what is a family unit.

The bill also prohibits use of an estimated meter charge as a basis for a customer bill. It allows a utility to use a customer provided meter reading as a basis for that customer's bill.