

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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1 FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
2

3 ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE  
4

5 Legislative Document

No. 961

6  
7 H.P. 749

House of Representatives, March 2, 1983

8 Submitted by the Office of Public Advocate pursuant to Joint Rule  
9 24.

10 On Motion of Representative Vose of Eastport referred to the Com-  
mittee on Public Utilities. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative Crowley of Stockton Springs.

11 Cosponsors: Representative Carroll of Gray, Senator Kany of Ken-  
nebec and Representative Hayden of Durham.

12 STATE OF MAINE  
13

14 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
15 NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE  
16

17 AN ACT to Require the Public Utilities  
18 Commission to Expeditiously Process Consumer  
19 Complaints.  
20

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

23 Sec. 1. 35 MRSA §291 is amended to read:

24 §291. Complaints

25 Upon written complaint made against any public  
26 utility by 10 persons, firms, corporations or associ-  
27 ations aggrieved, that any of the rates, tolls,  
28 charges or schedules or any joint rate or rates of  
29 any public utility are in any respect unreasonable or  
30 unjustly discriminatory, or that any regulation, mea-  
31 surement, practice or act of ~~said~~ that public utility  
32 is in any respect unreasonable, insufficient or  
33 unjustly discriminatory, or that any service is

1 inadequate or cannot be obtained, the commission,  
2 being satisfied that the petitioners are responsible  
3 and that a hearing is expedient, shall proceed with  
4 or without notice to make an investigation thereof.  
5 No order affecting said the rates, tolls, charges,  
6 schedules, regulations, measurements, practices or  
7 acts complained of shall may be entered by the com-  
8 mission without a formal public hearing.

9 Sec. 2. 35 MRSA §292 is amended to read:

10 §292. Notice of complaint

11 The commission immediately upon the filing of  
12 such that complaint shall notify in writing the  
13 public utility complained of that a complaint has  
14 been made, and of the nature thereof. If at the  
15 expiration of 7 days therefrom such that public util-  
16 ity shall not have removed the cause of complaint to  
17 the satisfaction of the commission, said the commis-  
18 sion shall proceed to set a time and place for a  
19 hearing as provided. The hearing shall be promptly  
20 set. In the absence of an informal disposition pur-  
21 suant to Title 5, section 9053, the commission shall  
22 render a decision upon the complaint no later than 9  
23 months after its filing.

24 STATEMENT OF FACT

25 Ten or more customers of a public utility may  
26 complain to the Public Utilities Commission regarding  
27 rate levels, the quality of service provided or any  
28 act or practice of a utility. Unlike a request by a  
29 utility for a rate increase, no time limit is placed  
30 upon the processing of a consumer complaint. This  
31 bill provides for the expeditious processing of con-  
32 sumer complaints and gives them the same priority as  
33 a utility's request for a rate increase.

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