

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 117th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1995

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Legislative Document

No. 61

S.P. 31

In Senate, January 17, 1995

**An Act to Facilitate Charging Electric Utility Customers Based on Actual Usage.**

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Reference to the Committee on Utilities and Energy suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "May M. Ross".

MAY M. ROSS  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator HANLEY of Oxford.

Cosponsored by Senators: AMERO of Cumberland, BENOIT of Franklin, CARPENTER of York, GOLDTHWAIT of Hancock, HALL of Piscataquis, HATHAWAY of York, SMALL of Sagadahoc, STEVENS of Androscoggin, Representatives: BARTH of Bethel, BIRNEY of Paris, HARTNETT of Freeport, UNDERWOOD of Oxford, WATERHOUSE of Bridgton, WINSOR of Norway.

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

4 **Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §3104** is enacted to read:

6 **§3104. Billing practices; estimated usage; electric utilities**

8 An electric utility may not bill any customer on the basis  
10 of a utility's estimate of the customer's usage except in  
12 conformity with this section.

14 **1. Customer choice.** An electric utility proposing to bill  
16 any customer on the basis of the utility's estimate of the  
18 customer's usage shall:

20 A. Send a notice to each affected customer at least once  
22 every 3 months informing the customer that the customer may  
24 choose to be billed on the basis of the customer's meter  
26 reading in lieu of being billed on the basis of the  
28 utility's estimate;

30 B. Provide with each notice sent pursuant to paragraph A  
32 postage-paid business reply cards on which the customer may  
34 mark the customer's meter reading. The number of business  
36 reply cards must be equal to the number of customer billing  
38 cycles in which the utility plans to bill the customer on  
40 the basis of estimated usage; and

42 C. Include in each notice sent pursuant to paragraph A an  
44 appropriate explanation of how to read electric meters, when  
46 the reading needs to occur and when the reading needs to  
48 reach the utility in order for the utility to use it for  
50 billing purposes.

**2. Requirement.** An electric utility shall use a customer's  
meter reading in lieu of the utility's estimate of the customer's  
usage whenever the utility receives the customer's meter reading  
in time for billing.

Nothing in this section limits the authority of the  
commission to regulate the billing practices of electric  
utilities consistent with this section.

**STATEMENT OF FACT**

This bill restricts electric utilities in the practice of billing customers on the basis of utility estimates of the customers' usage. Currently, the Central Maine Power Company is billing customers in every other billing cycle on the basis of the utility's estimate of the customers' usage. In the following

2 billing cycle the utility reconciles the estimate with actual  
usage based on meter readings.

4 This bill would allow a customer the option of choosing to  
6 be billed on the basis of the customer's meter reading in lieu of  
being billed on the basis of the utility estimate. This bill  
8 requires a utility to notify customers of this option on a  
quarterly basis during any period in which the utility proposes  
to use an estimated-usage billing procedure.