

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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117th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1995

Legislative Document

No. 649

H.P. 468

House of Representatives, February 28, 1995

**An Act to Prohibit an Electric Utility from Estimating a Monthly Bill at
a Rate Higher Than the Prior Month's Bill.**

(EMERGENCY)

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph W. Mayo".

JOSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative GOULD of Greenville.

Cosponsored by Representatives: BUNKER of Kossuth Township, DEXTER of Kingfield,
ETNIER of Harpswell, GERRY of Auburn, GOOLEY of Farmington, GREEN of Monmouth,
HICHBORN of LaGrange, MARSHALL of Eliot, TREAT of Gardiner, TRIPP of Topsham,
WATSON of Farmingdale.

2 **Emergency preamble.** **Whereas,** Acts of the Legislature do not
become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted
as emergencies; and

4 **Whereas,** Central Maine Power Company is currently billing
6 customers in every other billing cycle on the basis of the
utility's estimate of the customers' usage; and

8 **Whereas,** the overcharging of customers based on an electric
10 utility's estimate of the customers' usage is resulting in severe
hardship for certain customers; and

12 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts
14 create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of
Maine and require the following legislation as immediately
16 necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and
safety; now, therefore,

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

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

22 **§3104. Billing practices; estimated usage; electric utilities**

24 An electric utility may not bill any customer on the basis
26 of the utility's estimate of the customer's usage except in
conformity with this section. When a utility's estimate of a
28 customer's usage is higher than the customer's prior month's
usage, the utility shall bill the customer for usage equal to
30 that of the prior month.

32 This section does not limit the authority of the commission
to regulate the billing practices of an electric utility
34 consistent with this section.

36 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the
preamble, this Act takes effect when approved.

38
40 **STATEMENT OF FACT**

42 This bill restricts electric utilities in the practice of
44 billing customers on the basis of utility estimates of the
customers' usage. When an electric utility's estimate of a
46 customer's usage is higher than the customer's prior month's
bill, the utility must bill the customer for usage equal to the
prior month's usage.