

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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UTILITIES AND ENERGY

Reported by: Carey

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STATE OF MAINE SENATE 118TH LEGISLATURE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to S.P. 241, L.D. 810, Bill, "An Act to Clarify the Duties of the Office of the Public Advocate"

Amend the bill by striking everything after the enacting clause and before the summary and inserting in its place the following:

Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §1702-A is enacted to read:

§1702-A. Evaluation of needs and resources

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Low-income consumers" means residential consumers for whom paying public utility bills is difficult or impossible without some form of assistance or government aid;

B. "Residential consumers" means consumers who take public utility service for domestic purposes; and

C. "Small business consumers" means commercial consumers that employ fewer than 100 employees.

2. Intent. It is the intent of the Legislature that the resources of the Public Advocate be devoted to the maximum extent possible to ensuring adequate representation of the interests of those consumers whose interests would otherwise be inadequately represented in matters within the jurisdiction of the commission.

2 3. Priority. When the interests of consumers differ, the
3 Public Advocate shall give priority to representing the interests
4 of consumers in the following order:

5 A. Low-income consumers;

6 B. Residential consumers;

7 C. Small business consumers; and

8 D. Other consumers whose interests the Public Advocate
9 finds to be inadequately represented.

10 This subsection does not require the Public Advocate to represent
11 the interests of a consumer or group of consumers if the Public
12 Advocate determines that such representation is adverse to the
13 overall interests of the using and consuming public.'

14 Further amend the bill by inserting at the end before the
15 summary the following:

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23 **FISCAL NOTE**

24 The Office of the Public Advocate within the Executive
25 Department may incur some minor additional costs if the office
26 elects to intervene on behalf of residential and commercial
27 customers. These costs can be absorbed within the office's
28 existing budgeted resources.'

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31 **SUMMARY**

32 This amendment replaces the bill. The amendment requires
33 the Public Advocate to give priority to representing low-income,
34 residential, small business and other consumers who are not
35 represented or inadequately represented in matters within the
36 jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Commission. This amendment
37 also adds a fiscal note to the bill.
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