

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1999

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Legislative Document

No. 894

H.P. 644

House of Representatives, February 2, 1999

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### **An Act to Facilitate Price Comparisons for Utility Service.**

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Submitted by the Office of Public Advocate pursuant to Joint Rule 204.  
Reference to the Committee on Utilities and Energy suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph W. Mayo".

JOSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative BERRY of Belmont.  
Cosponsored by Senator KONTOS of Cumberland and  
Representatives: BRYANT of Dixfield, COLWELL of Gardiner, DAVIDSON of Brunswick,  
DUNCAN of Presque Isle, LaVERDIERE of Wilton, McGLOCKLIN of Embden, ROSEN of  
Bucksport, SAVAGE of Buxton.

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

4 **Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §304**, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 141, Pt. A,  
§6, is amended to read:

6 **§304. Filing of schedules of rates, terms and conditions**

8 Every public utility shall file with the commission, within  
a time to be fixed by the commission, schedules ~~which shall~~ that  
10 must be open to public inspection. The schedules shall must show  
all rates, tolls and charges ~~which~~ that the utility has  
12 established and ~~which~~ that are in force at the time for any  
service performed by it within the State, or for any service in  
14 connection with or performed by any public utility controlled or  
operated by it or in conjunction with it. Every public utility  
16 shall file with and as part of its schedules all terms and  
conditions that in any manner affect the rates charged or to be  
18 charged for any service.

20 Public utility schedules ~~which~~ that were formerly designated  
as rules ~~shall be~~ are designated as terms and conditions. All  
22 such schedules to be filed with the commission shall must be  
designated as terms and conditions.

24 The commission may require any utility or licensee subject  
26 to the jurisdiction of the commission to provide information to  
the commission regarding the lowest prices for retail service.  
28 The information must be provided in a format as agreed upon by  
the commission and the Public Advocate and may be used only for  
30 the purpose of preparing and publishing rate comparisons for  
utility services that are subject to competition. The commission  
32 may not require a utility to provide the information required by  
this section more than twice a year.

34 **Sec. 2. 35-A MRSA §1708**, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 141, Pt.  
36 A, §6, is amended by adding at the end a new paragraph to read:

38 The Public Advocate may not require more than twice a year  
any utility or licensee subject to the commission's jurisdiction  
40 to provide information concerning the lowest available prices for  
retail service in a format to be specified jointly by the  
42 commission and the Public Advocate. The information may be used  
only for the purpose of preparing and publishing rate comparisons  
44 for utility services that are subject to any degree of  
competition.

## SUMMARY

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The Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy formally requested the Office of the Public Advocate to prepare and publish rate comparisons for long-distance telephone service in the State based on tariff filings at the Public Utilities Commission. Since that time, the Public Advocate has published 2 sets of rate comparisons and expects to continue publishing biannually. This bill extends the Public Advocate's authority to require and publish such information to other industries experiencing competition for utility service, such as the electricity marketing and natural gas industries, and requires the Public Utilities Commission and the Public Advocate to jointly specify the format for information provided by utilities for this purpose.