

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2000

Legislative Document

No. 2656

S.P. 1062

In Senate, March 28, 2000

An Act to Provide Affordability in New Home Construction for Maine Families.

(AFTER DEADLINE)

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator LIBBY of York.
Cosponsored by Representative NASS of Acton and
Senator BENNETT of Oxford, Representative: McALEVEY of Waterboro.

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

Whereas, until recently, the cost of the first 300 feet of single-phase overhead line extensions for homeowners was borne by electric utilities; and

Whereas, the Public Utilities Commission has just approved a policy change that requires an electric utility to provide to homeowners for free only the first 75 feet of single-phase overhead line extensions, increasing the cost of new homes in some cases by several thousand dollars; and

Whereas, these new rules threaten to push the cost and affordability of a new home out of the range of some lower-income home buyers; and

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

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

Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §314 is enacted to read:

§314. Single-phase overhead line extensions

1. Single customers. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, an electric utility may not require a customer to pay for the installation of the first 300 feet of a single-phase overhead line extension provided by the utility to the customer. For the installation of an extension of more than 300 feet up to 1,000 feet along a private way and up to 2,000 feet along a public way, or 2,000 feet in part along a public way and in part along a private way with up to 1,000 feet along a private way, the electric utility may enter a contract with a customer that charges the customer installation costs of up to 11 cents per foot per month, including the first 300 feet, on the customer's utility bill for a period of up to 5 years or until the average length of line per customer drops to 300 feet or less. For an extension of over 2,000 feet along a public way or 1,000 feet along a private way, the customer shall pay for the cost of the extension beyond the maximum length.

2. Multiple customers. For an extension that will serve more than one customer, the utility shall calculate the average length of line per customer to treat each customer as a single

customer pursuant to section 1. If a new customer is added to a line still under contract, the utility shall recalculate all subsequent charges as if all customers were connected initially and terminate all contracts on the same date as the original contract. If the addition of a new customer causes the average length of line per customer to fall to 300 feet or less, all contracts for that line are terminated. For residential developments, the developer shall pay the cost of the installation of the extension that exceeds 300 feet for each customer in the development.

Sec. 2. Standard installation cost. An electric utility shall submit to the Public Utilities Commission within 90 days after the effective date of this Act a proposed standard per-foot installation charge for single-phase overhead distribution line extensions that will be applied uniformly to every customer of the utility.

Sec. 3. Application. This Act applies to all single-phase overhead line extensions installed on or after January 1, 2000.

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

SUMMARY

This bill requires electric utilities to provide the first 300 feet of a single-phase overhead distribution line extension to a customer for free and allows for installment payments for up to 5 years for extensions of up to 2,000 feet, which was the policy of Central Maine Power Company until a recent order by the Public Utilities Commission that requires that only the first 75 feet of a single-phase overhead line extension be provided for free to a customer. This bill also requires electric utilities to submit a proposed standard per-foot installation charge for single-phase overhead distribution line extensions within 90 days after the effective date of this bill.