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H.P. 717

House of Representatives, February 15, 2001

An Act to Authorize the Maine State Housing Authority to Administer an Electric Assistance Program.

(EMERGENCY)

Submitted by the Public Utilities Commission pursuant to Joint Rule 204. Reference to the Committee on Business and Economic Development suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. Mac Jailand

MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND, Clerk

Presented by Representative SAVAGE of Buxton.

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

Whereas, the 118th Legislature enacted Public Law 1997,
 chapter 316, requiring the Public Utilities Commission to establish needs-based assistance for low-income persons in this
 8 State; and

10 Whereas, the Public Utilities Commission will establish an electric assistance program to become effective before the winter 12 of 2001-2002; and

14 Whereas, this legislation needs to take effect immediately to allow the Maine State Housing Authority the time necessary to 16 implement procedures to administer this electric assistance program; 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. 30-A MRSA c. 201, sub-c. XI-A is enacted to read:

SUBCHAPTER XI-A

ELECTRIC ASSISTANCE

§4961. Electric assistance program

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 Definitions. As used in this subchapter, unless the
 context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.
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A. "Authority" means the Maine State Housing Authority 40 established pursuant to section 4722.

 B. "Electric assistance" means assistance as established by the commission pursuant to Title 35-A, section 3214 and rules adopted pursuant to that section, based on an eligible household's income level and electricity usage and paid to an electric utility on behalf of an eligible household.

 48 <u>C. "Electric utility" means a transmission and distribution</u> <u>utility as defined in Title 35-A, section 102, subsection</u>
 50 <u>20-B.</u>

| 2 | D. "Eligible household" means a household that is eligible |
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| 4 | to receive fuel assistance through the Maine State Housing Authority pursuant to section 4722, subsection 1, paragraph |
| 6 | W; section 4741, subsection 15; and subchapter XIII and rules adopted pursuant to these laws. "Eligible household" |
| 8 | does not include a tenant who resides in subsidized housing and receives a utility allowance or a tenant whose utilities are included in the rent. |
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| 12 | E. "Commission" means the Public Utilities Commission established pursuant to Title 35-A, section 103. |
| 14 | F. "Fund" means the Electric Assistance Program Fund established in section 4962. |
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| 18 | G. "Program" means the electric assistance program established by the commission pursuant to Title 35-A, section 3214. |
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| 22 | 2. Program administration. The authority shall administer the program directly or through regional contract agents. The program may be administered in conjunction with other programs of |
| 24 | the authority. |
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| 26 | 3. Reporting requirements. The authority shall report annually to the commission information to determine the amount of |
| 26 28 | annually to the commission information to determine the amount of funding necessary for the program, including the amount of |
| | annually to the commission information to determine the amount of funding necessary for the program, including the amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of each eligible household, the total amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of |
| 28 | annually to the commission information to determine the amount of funding necessary for the program, including the amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of each eligible household, the total amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of eligible households, the number of eligible households served and other reasonably necessary information required by the commission |
| 28 30 32 | annually to the commission information to determine the amount of funding necessary for the program, including the amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of each eligible household, the total amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of eligible households, the number of eligible households served and |
| 28 30 32 34 | annually to the commission information to determine the amount of funding necessary for the program, including the amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of each eligible household, the total amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of eligible households, the number of eligible households served and other reasonably necessary information required by the commission in connection with the program. 4. Rulemaking. The authority may adopt rules to implement |
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| 28 30 32 34 36 38 | annually to the commission information to determine the amount of funding necessary for the program, including the amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of each eligible household, the total amount of electric assistance paid on behalf of eligible households, the number of eligible households served and other reasonably necessary information required by the commission in connection with the program. 4. Rulemaking. The authority may adopt rules to implement this subchapter. Rules adopted pursuant to this subchapter are routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter II-A. §4962. Electric Assistance Program Fund 1. Established. The fund is established under the |
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| 2 | B. All money appropriated by the State for inclusion in the fund; |
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| | C. Subject to any pledge, contract or other obligation, all |
| 6 | interest, dividends and pecuniary gains from the investment |
| 0 | of money in the fund; and |
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| | D. All other money deposited in the fund to implement the |
| 10 | provisions of this subchapter. |
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| 12 | 3. Application of fund. The authority shall apply money in |
| | the fund to provide electric assistance for the benefit of |
| 14 | eligible households and for other purposes authorized by this |
| | subchapter. Money in the fund not currently needed for purposes |
| 16 | of this subchapter may be deposited with the authority to the |
| 10 | credit of the fund and may be invested as provided by law. Ten |
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| 18 | percent of the fund may be used by the authority to pay for the |
| | administrative expenses of the fund and operation of the program. |
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| | 4. Accounts within the fund. The authority may divide the |
| 22 | fund into separate accounts as it determines necessary or |
| | convenient to accomplish the purposes of this subchapter. |
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| | 5. Revolving fund. The fund is a revolving fund. The |
| 26 | authority shall continuously apply the money in the fund to |
| | accomplish the purposes of this subchapter. |
| 28 | accomprism one purposes or onrs subchapter. |
| 28 | Emergency clours to be at the success when the |
| | Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the |
| 30 | preamble, this Act takes effect when approved. |
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| | SUMMARY |
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| | This bill requires the Maine State Housing Authority to |
| 36 | administer the electric assistance program established by the |
| | Public Utilities Commission to provide electric assistance to |
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38 low-income households.