

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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124th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2010

Legislative Document

No. 1695

H.P. 1196

House of Representatives, January 6, 2010

**An Act To Direct the Public Utilities Commission To Adopt Rules
To Improve the Safety of Multiunit Rental Dwellings**

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

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

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative ADAMS of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator CRAVEN of Androscoggin and
Representatives: ROTUNDO of Lewiston, STUCKEY of Portland.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §704, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 1999, c. 398, Pt. A, §18
3 and affected by §§104 and 105, is further amended to read:

4 **1. Residential customers.** The commission shall adopt and promulgate reasonable
5 rules after a hearing concerning the termination or disconnection of any residential
6 customer's service by a transmission and distribution, gas, water or telephone utility of
7 the State. These rules apply generally to all such utilities within the commission's
8 jurisdiction and must provide for adequate written notice by that utility to the residential
9 customer that the customer's utility bill has not been paid, and a notice of the prospective
10 termination or disconnection and the right, prior to disconnection, to enter into reasonable
11 installment payment arrangements with that utility; to settle any dispute concerning the
12 proposed disconnection at an informal hearing with that utility and to appeal the results of
13 that utility's decision to the commission. The rules must also provide that there may be
14 no termination or disconnection during a limited medical emergency and for a just and
15 reasonable procedure regarding reconnections of utility service and deposit requirements.
16 Whenever a utility customer in a rental unit is involuntarily disconnected and is no longer
17 considered to be a customer by that utility, the utility shall provide notice of the
18 disconnection to the owner of that rental unit.

19 **SUMMARY**

20 This bill requires the Public Utilities Commission to adopt rules that require the
21 notification of the owner of multiunit residential rental property when utilities are
22 disconnected or terminated and provide the tenant whose service is being disconnected or
23 terminated with information about utility payment assistance programs.