

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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125th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2011

Legislative Document

No. 197

H.P. 174

House of Representatives, January 27, 2011

An Act To Improve Response to Gas Safety Emergencies

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather J.R. Priest".

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST
Clerk

Presented by Representative HINCK of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator ALFOND of Cumberland and
Representatives: BEAVERS of South Berwick, BERRY of Bowdoinham, CHIPMAN of
Portland, FITTS of Pittsfield, GOODE of Bangor, LUCHINI of Ellsworth.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §4712** is enacted to read:

3 **§4712. Gas emergency response**

4 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates,
5 "natural gas event" means an explosion, fire or similar event that is caused by or involves
6 natural gas controlled, transported or delivered by a gas utility or a natural gas pipeline
7 utility and that causes property damage or personal injury.

8 **2. Response.** Following a natural gas event, the commission shall:

9 A. Immediately seek to ensure, to the full extent of its authority and resources, that
10 all evidence of the natural gas event is retained and secured;

11 B. In any commission proceeding concerning the natural gas event, afford any
12 person injured by the event and any person who suffered property damage in the
13 event an opportunity to address the commission regarding the event;

14 C. To the extent practicable, consistent with section 117, use any administrative
15 penalties collected from a gas utility or natural gas pipeline utility for a violation of
16 this Title relating to the natural gas event to equitably compensate persons not
17 otherwise fully compensated for injuries or property damage suffered as a result of
18 the event; and

19 D. Cooperate with and assist, to the extent reasonable and practicable, any person
20 seeking recovery in a civil action against a natural gas utility or natural gas pipeline
21 utility for personal injury or property damage suffered as a result of the natural gas
22 event.

23 **SUMMARY**

24 This bill requires the Public Utilities Commission, in the event of a natural gas
25 explosion or fire or other natural gas event involving a gas utility or natural gas pipeline
26 utility that results in injury to persons or damage to property, to:

27 1. Immediately seek to ensure, to the full extent of its authority and resources, that all
28 evidence of the natural gas event is retained and secured;

29 2. In any commission proceeding concerning the natural gas event, afford any person
30 injured by the event and any person who suffered any property damage in the event an
31 opportunity to address the commission regarding the event;

32 3. Use administrative penalties collected from a gas utility or natural gas pipeline
33 utility for violations relating to the event to equitably compensate persons not otherwise
34 fully compensated for injuries or property damage suffered as a result of the event; and

35 4. Cooperate with and assist, to the extent reasonable and practicable, any person
36 seeking recovery in a civil action against a natural gas utility or natural gas pipeline
37 utility for personal injury or property damage suffered as a result of the event.