

JOINT RESOLUTIONS

FOR the purpose of requesting the Public Service Commission to prohibit certain public service companies from terminating certain service to certain customers during certain periods; and generally relating to the termination of certain services by certain public service companies.

WHEREAS, The General Assembly recognizes that a continuing source of gas and electricity service is indispensable to protect life and health; and

WHEREAS, The denial of such services may constitute a serious disruption to the normal pattern of daily life to which citizens of Maryland have become accustomed; and

WHEREAS, Recent substantial increases in all energy costs for household purposes have made it more difficult for Maryland citizens with low or fixed incomes to afford these services; and

WHEREAS, The circumstances under which gas and electric services may be terminated during colder months should be closely regulated by the Public Service Commission; and

WHEREAS, As part of its regulations, the Public Service Commission should establish notification and appeal procedures for customers threatened with termination; and

WHEREAS, These regulations should not, however, provide protection against termination for persons who have obtained or who are utilizing gas and electric service by fraudulent means; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Maryland Public Service Commission is requested to establish regulations to provide that, during the period November 15 through April 1 of each year, a gas company, an electric company, or a gas and electric company shall not terminate service to residential occupants for nonpayment of bills, unless the company first certifies to the Public Service Commission, by affidavit filed at least 24 hours prior to the service termination, that termination will not constitute a threat to the life or health of the residential occupants; and be it further

RESOLVED, That these regulations shall require that the company personally notify the residential occupant of its intent to terminate service for nonpayment of bills and require that the company certify to the Commission that the personal notification was made a reasonable time prior to the service termination; and be it further

RESOLVED, That these regulations require that the company provide as part of the termination notice a statement that the customer has a right to contest the service termination, and that it provide customers with a reasonable opportunity to contest the termination; and be it further