

(b) Special funds appropriated in subsection (a)(2) through (4) of this section shall be recovered through the assessment on public utilities authorized under § 2-110 of the Public Utility Companies Article.

(c) Special funds appropriated in subsection (a)(5) of this section shall be credited from funds assessed under § 7-512.1 of the Public Utility Companies Article, as enacted by this Act, and the repeal of the property income tax credit and designation of special funding under Sections 2 and 10 of this Act.

SECTION 19. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, if any action is brought for declaratory, injunctive, or other relief to challenge the constitutionality or legality of any provision of this Act or any amendment made by this Act, the following rules shall apply:

(1) The action shall be filed in the Circuit Court of Baltimore City.

(2) The Attorney General, on behalf of the State, has an unconditional right to intervene and participate as a party in all aspects, including but not limited to the presentation of evidence and legal argument.

(3) A final decision of the Circuit Court shall be reviewable by appeal directly to the Court of Appeals of Maryland. Any such appeal shall be taken by the filing of a notice of appeal within 10 days after the entry of the final decision.

(4) It shall be the duty of the Circuit Court and the Court of Appeals to advance on the docket and to expedite to the greatest possible extent the disposition of the action and the appeal.

(5) No State funds may be spent directly or indirectly by any officer or unit of State government to challenge any provision of this Act, or to pay private counsel to challenge any provision of this Act, in a State court or federal court.

SECTION 20. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, notwithstanding § 7-510(c)(3) of the Public Utility Companies Article, as enacted by this Act:

(1) (a) an electric company is allowed to recover the costs of electricity for which it has contracted before the effective date of this Act to provide standard offer service; and.

~~(2) an electric company that is collecting an authorized reasonable return for providing standard offer service under an extension of the obligation to provide that service in a service territory in which a rate cap or freeze under § 7-505(d) of the Public Utility Companies Article is no longer in effect may continue to collect the return until the termination of the extension.~~

(b) (1) This ~~paragraph~~ subsection applies to an investor-owned electric company in a service territory in which a rate cap or freeze under § 7-505(d) of the Public Utility Companies Article is no longer in effect and which has a rate mitigation plan in effect on July 1, 2006 for residential customers, in accordance with an order by Order No. 80747 of the Public Service Commission, to limit the increase in the total electric rates to 15% on June 1, 2006, allow a 15.7% increase on March 1, 2007, allow