

SENATE BILL 658

C5

7lr1943

By: **Senators Benson, Currie, Muse, Robinson, and Rosapepe**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2017

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Termination of Electric or Gas Service – Prohibition**

3 FOR the purpose of prohibiting a public service company from terminating, under certain
4 circumstances, electric or gas service to a residential customer during a severe
5 weather period for a severe weather event and on certain days; prohibiting a public
6 service company, on receipt of a certain request or subsequent request, from
7 terminating, under certain circumstances, electric or gas service to a residential
8 customer for a certain period of time beyond a scheduled termination of service date
9 under certain circumstances; prohibiting a public service company from granting an
10 additional period of service under certain circumstances; requiring that certain
11 claims made in a certain request be certified to the public service company by certain
12 medical professionals, subject to a certain exception; limiting the number of times a
13 certain request may be made during a certain period of time; requiring the Public
14 Service Commission to adopt certain regulations; defining certain terms; and
15 generally relating to the termination of electric or gas service.

16 BY adding to
17 Article – Public Utilities
18 Section 7–307.3, 7–307.4, and 7–307.5
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2010 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
22 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

23 **Article – Public Utilities**

24 **7–307.3.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) (I) "SEVERE WEATHER EVENT" MEANS ANY METEOROLOGICAL PHENOMENA WITH THE POTENTIAL TO CAUSE DAMAGE, SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL DISRUPTION, OR LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE.

(II) "SEVERE WEATHER EVENT" INCLUDES:

1. A HURRICANE;
2. A SNOWSTORM; AND
3. AN ICE STORM.

(3) "SEVERE WEATHER PERIOD" MEANS:

(I) 48 HOURS BEFORE A FORECASTED SEVERE WEATHER EVENT BEGINS IN THE STATE; AND

(II) THE DURATION OF A SEVERE WEATHER EVENT IN THE STATE.

(B) A PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY MAY NOT, BECAUSE OF A RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER'S FAILURE TO PAY AN ELECTRIC BILL OR A GAS BILL, TERMINATE ELECTRIC OR GAS SERVICE TO THE CUSTOMER DURING A SEVERE WEATHER PERIOD FOR A SEVERE WEATHER EVENT.

(C) THE COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SECTION.

7-307.4.

(A) A PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY MAY NOT, BECAUSE OF A RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER'S FAILURE TO PAY AN ELECTRIC BILL OR A GAS BILL, TERMINATE ELECTRIC OR GAS SERVICE TO THE CUSTOMER:

(1) ON A FRIDAY; OR

(2) ON A STATE OR NATIONAL HOLIDAY, OR THE DAY BEFORE THAT HOLIDAY.

(B) THE COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SECTION.

7-307.5.

(A) (1) ON RECEIPT OF A REQUEST TO CONTINUE ELECTRIC OR GAS SERVICE DESPITE A RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER'S FAILURE TO PAY AN ELECTRIC BILL OR A GAS BILL, A PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY MAY NOT TERMINATE THE CUSTOMER'S ELECTRIC OR GAS SERVICE FOR AN INITIAL PERIOD OF UP TO 30 DAYS BEYOND A SCHEDULED TERMINATION OF SERVICE DATE IF THE TERMINATION WILL AGGRAVATE AN EXISTING SERIOUS ILLNESS OR PREVENT THE USE OF LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT OF ANY OCCUPANT OF THE PREMISES.

(2) (I) SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, ON RECEIPT OF A SUBSEQUENT REQUEST TO CONTINUE ELECTRIC OR GAS SERVICE DESPITE A RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER'S FAILURE TO PAY AN ELECTRIC BILL OR A GAS BILL, A PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY MAY NOT TERMINATE THE CUSTOMER'S ELECTRIC OR GAS SERVICE FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF UP TO 30 DAYS BEYOND A SCHEDULED TERMINATION OF SERVICE DATE IF THE TERMINATION WILL AGGRAVATE AN EXISTING SERIOUS ILLNESS OR PREVENT THE USE OF LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT OF ANY OCCUPANT OF THE PREMISES.

(II) A REQUEST FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF SERVICE UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH MAY NOT BE GRANTED IF THE AMOUNT OWED BY THE RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER ON THE ACCOUNT TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY AT THE TIME OF THE REQUEST IS MORE THAN THE AMOUNT OWED BY THE CUSTOMER ON THE ACCOUNT TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY AT THE TIME OF A PREVIOUS REQUEST UNDER THIS SUBSECTION.

(B) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, A SERIOUS ILLNESS OR THE NEED FOR LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT CLAIMED IN A REQUEST TO CONTINUE ELECTRIC OR GAS SERVICE UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE CERTIFIED TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY BY:

(I) A LICENSED PHYSICIAN;

(II) A CERTIFIED NURSE PRACTITIONER; OR

(III) A PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT.

(2) A RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER MAY SELF-CERTIFY A SERIOUS ILLNESS OR THE NEED FOR LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT FOR A REQUEST FOR AN INITIAL PERIOD OF UP TO 30 DAYS.

1 (C) A REQUEST TO CONTINUE ELECTRIC OR GAS SERVICE UNDER
2 SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION MAY BE MADE UP TO ONLY THREE TIMES DURING
3 A 12-MONTH PERIOD.

4 (D) THE COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS
5 SECTION.

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
7 October 1, 2017.