

House Bill 1196

By: Representatives Evans of the 89th, Drenner of the 85th, Stoner of the 40th, Hutchinson of the 106th, Buckner of the 137th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 46 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to public utilities and
2 public transportation, so as to provide for certain utilities to allocate a portion of their
3 revenue above the authorized target return to a Georgians First Fund, to be used to assist low
4 and fixed income customers; to provide for definitions; to provide for promulgation of rules
5 and regulations by the Public Service Commission; to provide for related matters; to repeal
6 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Title 46 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to public utilities and public
10 transportation, is amended by adding a new chapter to read as follows:

11 "CHAPTER 3B

12 46-3B-1.

13 As used in this chapter, the term:

14 (1) 'High energy burden ZIP Code' means a ZIP Code where consumers pay, on average,
15 more than 6 percent of their income toward electricity bills.

16 (2) 'Utility' means any electric supplier whose rates are fixed by the commission.

17 46-3B-2.

18 (a) A Georgians First Fund shall be created and maintained by each utility from excess
19 utility revenues to support affordability, conservation, and access to essential electric
20 service for low-income rate payers.

21 (b) A utility shall make annual contributions to its Georgians First Fund as follows:

22 (1) In any year that the utility earns above the target return on equity but within an
23 authorized earnings band set by the commission in the utility's most recent rate case, the
24 utility shall allocate 5 percent of its above-target revenue to the fund; and

25 (2) In any year that the utility earns above the top end of the authorized earnings band
26 set by the commission in the utility's most recent rate case, the utility shall allocate 5
27 percent of the above-target revenue, up to the top of the band, and 10 percent of the
28 above-band revenue to the Georgians First Fund.

29 (c)(1) All contributions allocated to a Georgians First Fund shall only be used to fund
30 one or more programs offered by a utility to accomplish long-term reductions in electric
31 bills for its participating low-income customers. Such programs may include the
32 following components:

33 (A) Bill assistance;

34 (B) Energy efficiency;

35 (C) Weatherization, which may include any safety related upgrades needed to
36 accomplish weatherization;

37 (D) Demand-side management;

38 (E) Customer sited solar, which may include solar systems sited at multifamily housing
39 units that create bill savings for tenants; and

40 (F) Community solar.

41 (2) Priority shall be given to programs that focus on reducing electric bills of customers
42 living in high energy burden ZIP Codes. Programs shall be proposed by the utility on an
43 annual basis and may be approved or amended by the commission after input from
44 stakeholders and members of the public.

45 (d) No more than 5 percent of total allocated funds in any Georgians First Fund shall go
46 toward the cost of implementing and administering programs.

47 (e) No more than 70 percent of the annual contributions to its Georgians First Fund may
48 be distributed by a utility in any given year.

49 46-3B-3.

50 (a) On or before December 31, 2024, the commission shall adopt rules and regulations
51 governing any Georgians First Fund created pursuant to Code Section 46-3B-2 in order to
52 facilitate the implementation of the provisions of this chapter.

53 (b) Nothing in this chapter shall alter the utility's obligations under Code Section 46-3A-2."

54 **SECTION 2.**

55 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.