



General Assembly

February Session, 2020

Raised Bill No. 175

LCO No. 1668



Referred to Committee on ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY

Introduced by:
(ET)

AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRICITY SHUTOFF NOTIFICATIONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 16-262d of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
3 *1, 2020*):

4 (a) No electric distribution, gas, telephone or water company, no
5 electric supplier and no municipal utility furnishing electric, gas or
6 water service may terminate such service to a residential dwelling on
7 account of nonpayment of a delinquent account unless such company,
8 electric supplier or municipal utility first gives notice of such
9 delinquency and impending termination by (1) first class mail
10 addressed to the customer to which such service is billed, (2) electronic
11 mail sent to the most recent electronic mail address provided by the
12 customer to which such service is billed, (3) text message sent to the
13 phone number of the most recent mobile telephone, as defined in section
14 14-296aa, provided by the customer to which such service is billed, and
15 (4) a phone call to the phone number of the most recent mobile
16 telephone, as defined in section 14-296aa, provided by the customer to

17 which such service is billed at least thirteen calendar days prior to the
18 proposed termination, except that if an electric distribution or gas
19 company, electric supplier or municipal utility furnishing electric or gas
20 service has issued a notice under this subsection but has not terminated
21 service prior to issuing a new bill to the customer, such company,
22 electric supplier or municipal utility may terminate such service only
23 after mailing the customer an additional notice of the impending
24 termination, addressed to the customer to which such service is billed
25 either [(1)] (A) by first class mail at least thirteen calendar days prior to
26 the proposed termination, or [(2)] (B) by certified mail, at least seven
27 calendar days prior to the proposed termination. In the event that
28 multiple dates of proposed termination are provided to a customer, no
29 such company, electric supplier or municipal utility shall terminate
30 service prior to the latest of such dates. For purposes of this subsection,
31 the thirteen-day periods and seven-day period shall commence on the
32 date such notice is mailed. If such company, electric supplier or
33 municipal utility does not terminate service within one hundred twenty
34 days after mailing the initial notice of termination, such company,
35 electric supplier or municipal utility shall [give] mail the customer a new
36 notice at least thirteen days prior to termination. Every termination
37 notice, except the text message termination notice described in this
38 subsection, issued by a public service company, electric supplier or
39 municipal utility shall contain or be accompanied by an explanation of
40 the rights of the customer provided in subsection (c) of this section.

41 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2020*) (a) On and after January 1,
42 2021, each gas and electric distribution company shall report monthly to
43 the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority the aggregate number of
44 customer utility service: (1) Terminations; (2) disconnections; and (3)
45 reconnections from the preceding month. Each gas and electric
46 distribution company shall report the corresponding data by customer
47 class, hardship status and zip code.

48 (b) On or before January 1, 2021, and annually thereafter, each gas
49 and electric distribution company shall report to the joint standing
50 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters

51 relating to energy the aggregate number of customer utility service: (1)
52 Terminations; (2) disconnections; and (3) reconnections from the
53 preceding year.

54 (c) On or before January 1, 2021, and annually thereafter, each gas
55 and electric distribution company shall report to the authority the
56 aggregate number of customer utility service: (1) Terminations; (2)
57 disconnections; and (3) reconnections from the preceding year. Each gas
58 and electric distribution company shall include information concerning
59 current and historical trends, extenuating circumstances and any other
60 information requested by the authority.

61 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2020*) (a) On or before January 1,
62 2021, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority shall initiate a
63 proceeding to examine all information provided by the gas and electric
64 distribution companies to a customer prior to termination of the
65 customer's utility service. The examination shall include, but is not
66 limited to, consideration of (1) practices used by the gas and electric
67 distribution companies concerning the due date for payments to avoid
68 termination of utility service; and (2) the display of such due date on the
69 customer's utility bill. On or before July 1, 2021, the authority shall
70 report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, the
71 results of such proceeding to the joint standing committee of the General
72 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to energy.

73 (b) On or before January 1, 2021, the gas and electric distribution
74 companies, the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection
75 and the authority shall verify all information relevant to the termination
76 process of a customer's utility service is published on the gas and electric
77 distribution company's respective Internet web sites and the Energize
78 Connecticut Internet web site or its successor.

79 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2020*) On or before January 1, 2021,
80 the authority shall initiate a proceeding to review the fees charged by
81 gas and electric distribution companies to reconnect a customer's utility
82 service. On or before July 1, 2021, the authority shall report, in

83 accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, the results of such
 84 proceeding to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
 85 having cognizance of matters relating to energy.

86 Sec. 5. Subdivision (5) of subsection (b) of section 16-262c of the
 87 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
 88 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2020*):

89 (5) Each gas and electric distribution company shall submit to the
 90 Public Utilities Regulatory Authority annually, on or before [July] April
 91 first, an implementation plan which shall include information
 92 concerning amortization agreements, counseling, reinstatement of
 93 eligibility, rate impacts and any other information deemed relevant by
 94 the authority. The [Public Utilities Regulatory Authority] authority
 95 may, in consultation with the [Office of Policy and Management]
 96 Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Office of
 97 Consumer Counsel, approve or modify such plan within [ninety] one
 98 hundred eighty days of receipt of the plan. If the authority does not take
 99 any action on such plan within [ninety] one hundred eighty days of its
 100 receipt, the plan shall automatically take effect at the end of the [ninety-
 101 day] one-hundred-eighty-day period, provided the authority may
 102 extend such period for an additional thirty days by notifying the
 103 company before the end of the [ninety-day] one-hundred-eighty-day
 104 period. Any amount recovered by a company in its rates pursuant to
 105 this subsection shall not include any amount approved by the [Public
 106 Utilities Regulatory Authority] authority as an uncollectible expense.
 107 The authority may deny all or part of the recovery required by this
 108 subsection if it determines that the company seeking recovery has been
 109 imprudent, inefficient or acting in violation of statutes or regulations
 110 regarding amortization agreements.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	16-262d(a)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	New section

Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2020</i>	16-262c(b)(5)

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) broaden the notice requirements prior to termination of utility service to include electronic mail, text message, and phone calls, (2) require gas and electric distribution companies to report the aggregate number of utility service terminations, disconnections and reconnections, and (3) require the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to examine the termination practices of the gas and electric distribution companies and report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to energy.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]