

2021 -- H 5442

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LC001366
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- TERMINATION OF SERVICE
DURING PERIODS OF DECLARED EMERGENCIES

Introduced By: Representatives Morales, Vella-Wilkinson, Barros, Giraldo, Ackerman,
Caldwell, McEntee, Henries, Alzate, and Amore

Date Introduced: February 10, 2021

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 39 of the General Laws entitled "PUBLIC UTILITIES AND
2 CARRIERS" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 1.3

4 TERMINATION OF SERVICE DURING PERIODS OF DECLARED EMERGENCIES

5 **39-1.3-1. Moratorium on termination of service during periods of declared**
6 **emergencies.**

7 (a) No public utility which distributes electricity or supplies natural or manufactured gas,
8 electric or water service shall terminate service to any household for failure to pay an outstanding
9 indebtedness for service during a period of any declared emergency issued by the governor pursuant
10 to the provisions of chapter 15 of title 30.

11 **39-1.3-2. Declared health emergencies.**

12 (a) During declared health emergencies related to epidemics, including the statewide
13 Covid-19 emergency, the commission shall issue the following orders:

14 (1) Suspension of any requirement to make payment for utility service statewide during the
15 duration of the emergency and for a period of ninety (90) days following the end of the emergency;

16 (2) Cancellation of late fees accrued from the date of the emergency declaration and for a
17 period of ninety (90) days following the end of the emergency;

18 (3) Prohibiting utility companies from adversely affecting the customer's credit rating for

1 any non-payment for utility service during the period of the emergency and for the period of ninety
2 (90) days after the end of the emergency;

3 (4) Requiring utility companies to resume services for anyone whose services were
4 terminated from the date of the declared emergency and for a period of (90) days following the end
5 of the emergency; and

6 (5) Any orders the commission deems appropriate in order to protect the health and welfare
7 of the public during a declared health emergency.

8 **39-1.3-3. Rules and regulations.**

9 The commission shall promulgate appropriate orders, rules and regulations for the
10 implementation of the provisions of this chapter.

11 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- TERMINATION OF SERVICE
DURING PERIODS OF DECLARED EMERGENCIES

1 This act would impose a moratorium on the termination of utility services throughout a
2 limited period of any emergency declared by the governor, with special provisions related to
3 emergencies related to health epidemics.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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