

ASSEMBLY TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

with committee amendments

ASSEMBLY, No. 4677

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 15, 2021

The Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4677.

As amended and reported, this bill requires a utility or authority providing electric, gas, sewer, or water service to a residential customer (customer), prior to discontinuing service to customer, or if the utility or authority discontinued service to a customer for nonpayment, to allow a customer to enter into a deferred payment agreement with the utility or authority under terms and conditions established by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) or the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), as appropriate. The terms and conditions are to be adopted as DCA or BPU rules and regulations and are to be consistent, as possible, with any existing BPU rules and regulations concerning the provision of deferred payment agreements. The rules and regulations shall, at a minimum, allow a customer to pay the outstanding balance owed prior to the discontinuance of service over a period of at least 12 months. The bill specifies that the payment of outstanding amounts would be structured so that the amount due during the first six months of monthly outstanding payments would be less than the amount due to for the balance of monthly outstanding payments. The bill would not impact a customer's liability for other service rendered by the utility or authority.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to allow a residential customer to enter into a deferred payment agreement with a utility or authority under terms and conditions established by the DCA and BPU, as appropriate. The terms and conditions are to be adopted as DCA and BPU rules and regulations and are to be consistent, as possible, with any existing BPU rules and regulations concerning the provision of deferred payment agreements.