

ASSEMBLY, No. 3671

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 17, 2022

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI

District 33 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER

District 28 (Essex)

Assemblyman PAUL D. MORIARTY

District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

Assemblywoman BRITNEE N. TIMBERLAKE

District 34 (Essex and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Extends prohibition on certain utility discontinuances for certain customers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning extended utility service protections for certain
2 customers and amending P.L.2021, c.317 (C.40A:5A-28 et al.).

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. Section 1 of P.L.2021, c.317 is amended to read as follows:

8 1. As used in sections 1 and 2 of P.L.2021, c.317:

9 “Local authority” means an authority, as defined in section 3 of
10 P.L.1983, c.313 (C.40A:5A-3), or a water district established
11 pursuant to R.S.40:62-96 et seq., that provides electric, sewer, or
12 water service.

13 “Municipal utility” means a municipal public utility, as defined
14 in N.J.S.40A:1-1, or a joint meeting or regional service agency as
15 defined in section 3 of P.L.2007, c.63 (C.40A:65-3), that provides
16 electric, sewer, or water service.

17 “Public utility” means a public utility, as defined pursuant to
18 R.S.48:2-13, that provides electric, gas, sewer, or water service.

19 “Residential customer” means a residential customer of record of
20 a local authority, municipal utility, or a public utility or any
21 residential tenant of a residence where the owner or any agent or
22 other representative of the owner of the residence is a non-
23 residential customer of record of a local authority, municipal utility,
24 or public utility.

25 “Submitted an application” means a residential customer has
26 created an application via the online portal or telephone hotline
27 operated by the Department of Community Affairs, or has
28 submitted a paper application to the Department of Community
29 Affairs or through a home energy assistance grantee agency. A
30 residential customer who has submitted an application shall include
31 those residential customers who have yet to provide, mail, or upload
32 documents that are required in order for the application for the
33 utility assistance program to be deemed complete.

34 “Utility emergency” means any condition constituting a potential
35 danger to life, health, or property that requires a local authority,
36 municipal utility, or public utility to discontinue or interrupt the
37 provision of electric, gas, sewer, or water service.

38

39 2. Section 2 of P.L.2021, c.317 is amended to read as follows:

40 2. a. The provisions of Executive Order No. 246 of 2021
41 concerning a grace period for residential customers of certain
42 utilities, including paragraphs two through four, nine through 14, 16
43 through 18, and 21, shall remain in effect for any local authority,
44 municipal utility, and public utility that provides, sewer, or water
45 service, and any municipal utility or rural electric cooperative that

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 provides electric service, through March 15, 2022. Any residential
2 customer sewer, or water service discontinuance, and any
3 discontinuance of electric service to a residential customer of a
4 municipal utility or rural electric cooperative occurring between the
5 end of the grace period established pursuant to Executive Order No.
6 246 of 2021 and the effective date of P.L.2021, c.317 (C.40A:5A-
7 28 et al.) shall be nullified and service shall be restored
8 immediately. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, a local
9 authority or municipal utility shall not place, sell, or enforce a lien
10 on real property for the unpaid balance of any electric or water
11 charges, or for the unpaid balance of any sewer charges not sold at
12 tax sale as of January 1, 2022 or otherwise accrued to a lien that
13 was struck off to a municipality or sold prior to January 1, 2022,
14 until after the expiration of the extended grace period pursuant to
15 this section. The extended grace period provided for in this section
16 shall expire on March 15, 2022.

17 b. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, prior to
18 discontinuing service to a residential customer, or placing, selling,
19 or enforcing a lien on real property owned by a residential customer
20 for the unpaid balance of any water charges accrued between the
21 declaration of a public health emergency in Executive Order No.
22 103 of 2020 and March 15, 2022, a local authority, municipal
23 utility, or public utility shall offer the residential customer a utility
24 service bill payment plan for the unpaid balance of any water
25 charges accrued prior to March 15, 2022. The utility service bill
26 payment plan shall have a minimum 12-month duration unless the
27 residential customer requests a shorter payback period, and shall not
28 require payment of a down payment, deposit, reconnection costs,
29 interest, or penalties. The local authority, municipal utility, or
30 public utility may offer residential customers a combined payment
31 and payment forgiveness plan with a duration of less than 12
32 months that involves forgiveness of at least 50 percent of the
33 outstanding principal upon the consent of the residential customer.
34 **[If]** Except as otherwise provided in subsection k. of this section, if
35 a residential customer does not agree to a utility service bill
36 payment plan pursuant to this subsection within 30 days of being
37 offered the plan by the local authority, municipal utility, or public
38 utility, the local authority, municipal utility, or public utility may
39 take appropriate enforcement action after March 15, 2022, including
40 discontinuing service or placing, selling, or enforcing a lien, to the
41 extent otherwise permitted by law.

42 c. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, prior to
43 discontinuing service to a residential customer, or placing, selling,
44 or enforcing a lien on real property owned by a residential
45 customer, for the unpaid balance of any electric charges accrued
46 between the declaration of a public health emergency in Executive
47 Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15, 2022, a municipal electric
48 utility or rural electric cooperative shall offer the residential

1 customer a utility service bill payment plan for the unpaid balance
2 of any electric charges accrued prior to March 15, 2022. The utility
3 service bill payment plan shall have a minimum 12-month duration
4 unless the residential customer requests a shorter payback period,
5 and shall not require payment of a down payment, deposit,
6 reconnection costs, interest, or penalties. The municipal electric
7 utility or rural electric cooperative may offer residential customers a
8 combined payment and payment forgiveness plan with a duration of
9 less than 12 months that involves forgiveness of at least 50 percent
10 of the outstanding principal upon the consent of the residential
11 customer. **[If]** Except as otherwise provided in subsection k. of this
12 section, if a residential customer does not agree to a utility service
13 bill payment plan pursuant to this subsection within 30 days of
14 being offered the plan by the municipal electric utility or rural
15 electric cooperative, the municipal electric utility or rural electric
16 cooperative may take appropriate enforcement action after March
17 15, 2022, including discontinuing service or placing, selling, or
18 enforcing a lien, to the extent otherwise permitted by law.

19 d. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, prior to
20 discontinuing service to a residential customer for the unpaid
21 balance of any electric or gas charges accrued between the
22 declaration of a public health emergency in Executive Order No.
23 103 of 2020 and the expiration date of Executive Order No. 246 of
24 2021, or in the case of a customer participating in the Winter
25 Termination Program set forth in N.J.A.C.14:3-3A.5, any electric or
26 gas charges accrued between the declaration of a public health
27 emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15,
28 2022, a public utility shall offer the residential customer a utility
29 service bill payment plan for the unpaid balance of any electric or
30 gas charges accrued prior to the expiration date of Executive Order
31 No. 246 of 2021 or, in the case of a customer participating in the
32 Winter Termination Program set forth in N.J.A.C.14:3-3A.5, any
33 electric or gas charges accrued prior to March 15, 2022. The utility
34 service bill payment plan shall have a minimum 12-month duration
35 unless the residential customer requests a shorter payback period,
36 and shall not require payment of a down payment, deposit,
37 reconnection costs, interest, or penalties. The public utility may
38 offer residential customers a combined payment and payment
39 forgiveness plan with a duration of less than 12 months that
40 involves forgiveness of at least 50 percent of the outstanding
41 principal upon the consent of the residential customer. **[If]** Except
42 as otherwise provided in subsection k. of this section, if a
43 residential customer does not agree to a utility service bill payment
44 plan pursuant to this subsection within 30 days of being offered the
45 plan by the public utility, the public utility may take appropriate
46 enforcement action after the expiration of Executive Order 246 of
47 2021 or for customers participating in the Winter Termination
48 Program set forth in N.J.A.C.14:3-3A.5 after March 15, 2022,

1 including discontinuing service, to the extent otherwise permitted
2 by law.

3 e. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, prior to
4 discontinuing service to a residential customer, or placing, selling,
5 or enforcing a lien on real property owned by a residential
6 customer, for the unpaid balance of any sewer charges accrued
7 between the declaration of a public health emergency in Executive
8 Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15, 2022 that had not been sold
9 at tax sale as of January 1, 2022 or otherwise accrued to a lien that
10 was struck off to a municipality or sold prior to January 1, 2022, a
11 local authority, municipal utility, or public utility shall offer a
12 residential customer a utility service bill payment plan for the
13 unpaid balance of any sewer charges accrued **【**between the
14 declaration of a public health emergency in Executive Order No.
15 103 of 2020 and**】** prior to March 15, 2022. The utility service bill
16 payment plan shall have a minimum 12-month duration unless the
17 residential customer requests a shorter payback period, and shall not
18 require a down payment, deposit, reconnection costs, interest, or
19 penalties. The local authority, municipal utility, or public utility
20 may offer residential customers a combined payment and payment
21 forgiveness plan with a duration of less than 12 months that
22 involves forgiveness of at least 50 percent of the outstanding
23 principal upon the consent of the residential customer. **【If】** Except
24 as otherwise provided in subsection k. of this section, if a
25 residential sewer customer does not agree to a utility service bill
26 payment plan within 30 days of being offered a plan by the local
27 authority, municipal utility, or public utility, the local authority,
28 municipal utility, or public utility may take appropriate enforcement
29 action after March 15, 2022, to the extent otherwise permitted by
30 law.

31 f. Utility service bill payment plans offered by municipal
32 utilities and local authorities pursuant to subsections b., c., and e. of
33 this section shall be subject to the provisions of R.S.54:5-19
34 pertaining to installment agreements, except as otherwise provided
35 in this section, and that a residential customer shall be offered a
36 utility service bill payment plan for the payment of water, sewer, or
37 electric charges that became delinquent notwithstanding whether a
38 parcel of property is already subject to an installment payment plan
39 pursuant to law.

40 g. No local authority, municipal utility, or public utility shall
41 collect any interest, fee, or charge from residential customers for
42 late or otherwise untimely payments of water charges that accrued
43 between the declaration of a public health emergency in Executive
44 Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15, 2022. A local authority,
45 municipality utility, or public utility may charge and collect fees,
46 interest, and penalties for delinquent water charges that accrued
47 prior to the declaration of a public health emergency in Executive

1 Order No. 103 of 2020 and after March 15, 2022, as permitted by
2 law.

3 h. No municipal electric utility or rural electric cooperative
4 shall collect any interest, fee, or charge from residential customers
5 for late or otherwise untimely payments of electric charges that
6 accrued between the declaration of a public health emergency in
7 Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15, 2022. A local
8 authority, municipal utility, or public utility may charge and collect
9 fees, interest, and penalties for delinquent electric charges that
10 accrued prior to the declaration of a public health emergency in
11 Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and after March 15, 2022, as
12 permitted by law.

13 i. No public utility shall collect any interest, fee, or charge
14 from residential customers for late or otherwise untimely payments
15 of electric or gas charges that accrued between the declaration of a
16 public health emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and
17 the expiration date of Executive Order No. 246 of 2021, or in the
18 case of a customer participating in the Winter Termination Program
19 set forth in N.J.A.C.14:3-3A.5, that accrued between the declaration
20 of a public health emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020
21 and March 15, 2022. A public utility may charge and collect fees,
22 interest, and penalties for delinquent electric or gas charges that
23 accrued prior to the declaration of a public health emergency in
24 Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and after the expiration date of
25 Executive Order No. 246 of 2021 or March 15, 2022, as applicable,
26 as permitted by law.

27 j. No local authority, municipal utility, or public utility shall
28 collect any interest, fee, or charge for late or otherwise untimely
29 payments of sewer charges that accrued between January 1, 2022
30 and March 15, 2022, or that accrued between the declaration of a
31 public health emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and
32 December 31, 2021 and had not been sold at tax sale as of January
33 1, 2022 or otherwise accrued to a lien that was struck off to a
34 municipality or sold prior to January 1, 2022. A local authority,
35 municipality utility, or public utility may charge and collect fees,
36 interest and penalties for delinquent sewer charges that accrued
37 prior to the declaration of a public health emergency in Executive
38 Order No. 103 of 2020 and after March 15, 2022, as permitted by
39 law.

40 k. (1) For a residential customer who, prior to June 15, 2022,
41 has submitted an application to a State agency for utility assistance
42 from the "Universal Service Fund," established pursuant to section
43 12 of P.L.1999, c.23 (C.48:3-60), the "Low Income Home Energy
44 Assistance Program," established pursuant to 42 U.S.C. s.8621 et
45 seq., the "Low Income Household Water Assistance Program,"
46 established pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act of
47 2021, Pub.L.116-260, or any other utility assistance program
48 administered by the State, but the residential customer has not

1 received an application determination from the appropriate State
2 agency, any local authority, municipal utility, public utility, or rural
3 electric cooperative within the residential customer's service
4 territory shall continue to provide electric, gas, sewer, or water
5 service to the residential customer for 60 days after the customer
6 has submitted an application. If the customer completes the
7 application, the local authority, municipal utility, public utility, or
8 rural electric cooperative shall continue to provide electric, gas,
9 sewer, or water service to the residential customer until such time as
10 the application is approved or rejected by the appropriate State
11 agency. Any discontinuance occurring to a residential customer
12 described in this paragraph between the end of the extended grace
13 period established pursuant to the effective date of P.L.2021, c.317
14 (C.40A:5A-28 et al.) and before the effective date of P.L. ,
15 c. (C.)(pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall be
16 nullified and service shall be restored immediately.

17 (2) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, when a
18 residential customer has, prior to June 15, 2022, submitted an
19 application to a State agency for utility assistance pursuant to
20 paragraph (1) of this subsection, a local authority or municipal
21 utility shall not place, sell, or enforce a lien on real property owned
22 by a residential customer for the unpaid balance of any electric or
23 water charges, or for the unpaid balance of any sewer charges not
24 sold at tax sale, or otherwise accrued to a lien that was struck off to
25 a municipality, or sold prior to January 1, 2022, until 60 days after
26 the customer has submitted an application, or, if the application is
27 completed, until such time as the application is approved or rejected
28 by the appropriate State agency. If a residential customer has
29 appealed a State agency's denial of a utility assistance program
30 application, a municipality or local authority shall delay placing,
31 selling, or enforcing a lien for the unpaid balance of water, sewer,
32 or electric charges pending conclusion of administrative review by
33 the State agency.

34 (3) Upon the termination of the protection from discontinuation
35 of service afforded to a residential customer pursuant paragraph (1)
36 of this subsection, the local authority, municipal utility, public
37 utility, or rural electric cooperative shall offer the residential
38 customer a utility service bill payment plan that conforms to the
39 requirements of subsections b., c., d., or e. of this section, as
40 applicable, except that such payment plan shall also include the
41 unpaid balance of any electric, gas, sewer, or water charges accrued
42 between March 15, 2022 and the termination of the protection from
43 discontinuation of service afforded pursuant to paragraph (1) of this
44 subsection. If the residential customer does not agree to a utility
45 service bill payment plan within 30 days of being offered a plan
46 pursuant to this paragraph, the local authority, municipal utility,
47 public utility, or rural electric cooperative may take appropriate
48 enforcement action, including discontinuing service or placing,

1 selling, or enforcing a lien, to the extent otherwise permitted by
2 law.

3 (4) Within two weeks of the effective date of
4 P.L. , c. (C.)(pending before the Legislature as this bill), and
5 on a bi-weekly basis thereafter, the Department of Community
6 Affairs, Department of Human Services, Board of Public Utilities,
7 or any other State agency that administers a utility assistance
8 program, shall provide written notice to each local authority,
9 municipal utility, public utility, and rural electric cooperative that
10 provides electric, gas, sewer, or water service within the residential
11 customer's service territory, which notice shall indicate:

12 (a) the name and address of each residential customer that has
13 submitted an application or completed an application to a utility
14 assistance program pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection; and

15 (b) the protections set forth in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this
16 subsection, which prohibit the discontinuance of any utility service
17 to that residential customer and the placing, selling, or enforcing of
18 a lien on real property owned by a residential customer until the
19 State agency determines the residential customer's application.

20 (5) Within 90 days of receiving a completed application for
21 utility assistance from a residential customer, the Department of
22 Community Affairs, Department of Human Services, Board of
23 Public Utilities, or any other State agency that administers a utility
24 assistance program shall provide approval or rejection of the
25 application to the residential customer via certified and regular mail
26 and, if applicable, the online portal in which the residential applied
27 for the utility assistance program.

28 (6) Within three business days of approving or rejecting a
29 residential customer's application for a utility assistance program,
30 the State agency that administers the utility assistance program shall
31 provide a notice of determination to each local authority, municipal
32 utility, public utility, and rural electric cooperative that provides
33 electric, gas, sewer, or water service within the residential
34 customer's service territory. In addition to any other information
35 that the State agency may deem appropriate, the written notice shall
36 indicate:

37 (a) the name and address of the residential customer who
38 applied for the utility assistance program;

39 (b) the decision made on the application and the amount of
40 assistance that will be provided to the residential customer; and

41 (c) the termination of the protections set forth in paragraphs (1)
42 and (2) of this subsection.

43 (7) A local authority, municipal utility, public utility, or rural
44 electric cooperative shall not be deemed to violate the provisions of
45 this subsection if:

46 (a) the State agency failed to provide notice to the local
47 authority, municipal utility, public utility, or rural electric
48 cooperative pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection and the

1 customer has not notified the local authority, municipal utility,
2 public utility, or rural electric cooperative of the submitted
3 application; or

4 (b) the local authority, municipal utility, public utility, or rural
5 electric cooperative determines, in good faith, that a utility
6 emergency requires the discontinuance or interruption of electric,
7 gas, sewer, or water service.

8 (8) Residential customers of a municipal utility or local
9 authority providing water or electric service shall have the interest
10 on unpaid delinquent water or electric charges calculated as
11 follows, with such calculations also to be used when calculating a
12 tax sale lien redemption:

13 (a) unpaid charges delinquent prior to March 9, 2020 shall have
14 interest calculated from either the due date or last date of payment
15 to March 9, 2020, and from March 16, 2022 until the date of
16 payment. No interest shall be calculated from March 9, 2020
17 through March 15, 2022; and

18 (b) unpaid charges delinquent from March 9, 2020 through
19 March 15, 2022 shall have interest calculated from March 16, 2022
20 to the date of payment.

21 (9) Residential customers of a municipal utility or local
22 authority providing sewer service shall have the interest on unpaid
23 sewer charges delinquent as of March 15, 2022 calculated from
24 March 16, 2022 to the date of payment.

25 (10) Redemptions of sewer liens that prior to January 1, 2022
26 were sold, accrued to a lien as a subsequent payment, or struck off
27 to a municipality shall have interest calculated from the date of tax
28 sale or the date of the subsequent payment to December 31, 2021,
29 and from March 16, 2022 to the date of redemption. No interest
30 shall be calculated from January 1, 2022 to March 15, 2022.

31 (11) Interest, late fees and penalties may be waived for
32 residential customers of municipal utilities or local authorities
33 providing water, sewer, or electric service to the extent necessary
34 for compliance with utility assistance program requirements.

35 (cf: P.L.2021, c.317, s.2)

36

37 3. (New section) a. Upon the effective date of
38 P.L. , c. (C.)(pending before the Legislature as this bill), the
39 Department of Community Affairs, Department of Human Services,
40 Board of Public Utilities, and any other State agency that
41 administers a utility assistance program shall update all public
42 information, including written materials, advertisements, and
43 websites, regarding the availability of the Winter Termination
44 Program set forth in N.J.A.C.14:3-3A.5, utility assistance from the
45 “Universal Service Fund,” established pursuant to section 12 of
46 P.L.1999, c.23 (C.48:3-60), the “Low Income Home Energy
47 Assistance Program,” established pursuant to 42 U.S.C. s.8621 et
48 seq., the “Low Income Household Water Assistance Program,”

1 established pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act of
2 2021, Pub.L.116-260, or any other utility assistance program
3 administered by the State.

4 The public information shall prominently include a statement of
5 the consumer protections residential customers shall receive if the
6 customer has submitted an application for a utility assistance
7 program or completed an application for a utility assistance
8 program.

9 b. Each local authority, municipal utility, public utility, or rural
10 electric cooperative shall provide the information in subsection a. of
11 this subsection in any communication to a residential customer in
12 connection with an overdue utility bill.

13
14 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall be
15 retroactive to March 15, 2022.

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17

18

STATEMENT

19

20 This bill provides that if a residential customer submitted an
21 application for utility assistance before June 15, 2022 to a State
22 agency but has not received an application determination from the
23 appropriate State agency, then the provisions of Executive Order
24 No. 246 of 2021 concerning a grace period for residential customers
25 are to remain in effect for 60 days after the customer has submitted
26 an application and any local authority, municipal utility, public
27 utility, or rural electric cooperative within the residential customer's
28 service territory is to continue to provide electric, gas, sewer, or
29 water service to that residential customer. If the customer
30 completes the application, the local authority, municipal utility,
31 public utility, or rural electric cooperative is to continue to provide
32 electric, gas, sewer, or water service to the residential customer
33 until such time as the application is approved or rejected by the
34 appropriate State agency. Any discontinuance occurring to a
35 residential customer described in the bill between the end of the
36 extended grace period established by P.L.2021, c.317 and before the
37 effective date the bill is to be nullified and service is to be restored
38 immediately.

39 The bill also provides that, when a residential customer has,
40 provides that a local authority or municipal utility is not to place,
41 sell, or enforce a lien on real property owned by a residential
42 customer for the unpaid balance of any electric or water charges, or
43 for the unpaid balance of any sewer charges not sold at tax sale, or
44 otherwise accrued to a lien that was struck off to a municipality
45 prior to January 1, 2022 until 60 days after the customer has
46 submitted an application, or, if the application is completed, until
47 such time as the application is approved or rejected by the

1 appropriate State agency, and the residential customer is offered a
2 utility service bill payment plan.

3 The bill requires the Department of Community Affairs (DCA),
4 Department of Human Services (DHS), Board of Public Utilities
5 (BPU), or any other State agency that administers a utility
6 assistance program to provide approval or rejection of the
7 application to the residential customer via certified and regular mail
8 and, if applicable, the online portal in which the residential applied
9 for the utility assistance program the 90 days of receiving a
10 completed application for utility assistance from a residential
11 customer.

12 Within two weeks of the effective date of the bill, and bi-weekly
13 thereafter, the DCA, DHS, BPU, and any other State agency that
14 administers a utility assistance program are to notify each local
15 authority, municipal utility, public utility, and rural electric
16 cooperative that provides electric, gas, sewer, or water service,
17 within the residential customer's service territory. This notice
18 would indicate:

19 1) the name and address of each residential customer that has
20 submitted an application or completed an application to a utility
21 assistance program pursuant to the bill; and

22 2) the protections set forth in the bill, which prohibit the
23 discontinuance of any utility service to that residential customer
24 until the State agency determines the residential customer's
25 application and the placing, selling, or enforcing of a lien on real
26 property owned by a residential customer until the State agency
27 determines the residential customer's application.

28 The bill provides that, within three business days of receiving
29 notice of the approval or rejection of a residential customer's
30 application for a utility assistance program, the appropriate State
31 agency is to provide a notice of determination to each local
32 authority, municipal utility, public utility, and rural electric
33 cooperative that provides electric, gas, sewer, or water service
34 within the residential customer's service territory. In addition to
35 any other information that the State agency may deem appropriate,
36 the written notice is to indicate:

37 1) the name and address of the residential customer who
38 applied for the utility assistance program;

39 2) the decision made on the application and the amount of
40 assistance that will be provided to the residential customer; and

41 3) the termination of the protections set forth in the bill.

42 The provisions of the bill are not to apply in certain situations.

43 A local authority, municipal utility, public utility, or rural
44 electric cooperative is not to be deemed to violate the provisions of
45 this subsection if: the State agency failed to provide notice to the
46 local authority, municipal utility, public utility, or rural electric
47 cooperative; or the local authority, municipal utility, public utility,
48 or rural electric cooperative determines, in good faith, that a utility

1 emergency requires the discontinuance or interruption of electric,
2 gas, sewer, or water service.

3 Upon the effective date of the bill, DCA, DHS, BPU, and any
4 other State agency that administers a utility assistance program is
5 required to update all public information, including written
6 materials, advertisements, and websites, regarding the availability
7 of the utility assistance programs administered by the State. The
8 public information is to prominently include a statement of the
9 consumer protections that residential customers receive if the
10 customer has submitted an application for utility assistance program
11 or completed an application for a utility assistance program. Each
12 local authority, municipal utility, public utility, or rural electric
13 cooperative is also required to provide this information in any
14 communication to a residential customer in connection with an
15 overdue utility bill.