PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Require That a Utility Company Notify the Owner of Property prior to Disconnecting Services

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §704, sub-§1, as amended by PL 1999, c. 398, Pt. A, §18 and affected by §§104 and 105, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

1. Residential customers. The commission shall adopt rules after a hearing concerning the termination or disconnection of a residential customer's service by a transmission and distribution, gas, water or telephone utility of the State. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. These rules must apply generally to all such utilities within the commission's jurisdiction and must provide:

A. That a utility must provide adequate written notice to the residential customer that the customer's utility bill has not been paid and a notice of the prospective termination or disconnection and of the customer's right, prior to disconnection, to enter into reasonable installment payment arrangements with that utility, to settle any dispute concerning the proposed disconnection at an informal hearing with that utility and to appeal the results of that utility's decision to the commission;

B. That there may be no termination or disconnection during a limited medical emergency;

C. A just and reasonable procedure regarding reconnections of utility service and deposit requirements; and

D. That, if the residential customer whose service is to be terminated or disconnected is a tenant of leased or rented property, a utility must notify the property owner or manager prior to disconnection.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Public Utilities Commission to adopt rules requiring a utility to notify a landlord when residential utility service of a tenant is to be terminated or disconnected.