

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 Direct the Public Utilities Commission To Adopt Rules To Improve the Safety of Multiunit Rental Dwellings**

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

**Sec. 1. 35-A MRS §704, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 1999, c. 398, Pt. A, §18 and affected by §§104 and 105, is further amended to read:

**1. Residential customers.** The commission shall adopt and promulgate reasonable rules after a hearing concerning the termination or disconnection of any residential customer's service by a transmission and distribution, gas, water or telephone utility of the State. These rules apply generally to all such utilities within the commission's jurisdiction and must provide for adequate written notice by that utility to the residential customer that the customer's utility bill has not been paid, and a notice of the prospective termination or disconnection and the 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. The rules must also provide that there may be no termination or disconnection during a limited medical emergency and for a just and reasonable procedure regarding reconnections of utility service and deposit requirements. Whenever a utility customer in a rental unit is involuntarily disconnected and is no longer considered to be a customer by that utility, the utility shall provide notice of the disconnection to the owner of that rental unit.

### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Public Utilities Commission to adopt rules that require the notification of the owner of multiunit residential rental property when utilities are disconnected or terminated and provide the tenant whose service is being disconnected or terminated with information about utility payment assistance programs.