



General Assembly

February Session, 2008

Raised Bill No. 5328

LCO No. 1519

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Referred to Committee on Energy and Technology

Introduced by:
(ET)

AN ACT CONCERNING UTILITY CUSTOMER SERVICE COMPLAINTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 16-20 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2008*):

3 (a) As used in this section, "private water company" means a
4 corporation, company, association, joint stock association, partnership,
5 other entity or person, or lessee thereof, owning, leasing, maintaining,
6 operating, managing or controlling any pond, lake, reservoir, stream,
7 well or distributing plant or system employed for the purpose of
8 supplying water to not less than two service connections or twenty-
9 five persons, but does not include a municipal waterworks system
10 established under chapter 102, a district, metropolitan district,
11 municipal district or special services district established under chapter
12 105, chapter 105a or any other general statute or any public or special
13 act which is authorized to supply water, or any other waterworks
14 system owned, leased, maintained, operated, managed, or controlled
15 by any unit of local government under any general statute or any
16 public or special act.

17 (b) If any public service company or private water company
18 unreasonably fails or refuses to furnish adequate service at reasonable
19 rates to any person within the territorial limits within which the
20 company has, by its charter, authority to furnish the service or, in the
21 case of a nonfranchised, nonchartered private water company, the
22 general territorial limits within which it operates, and if no other
23 specific remedy is provided in this title or in regulations adopted
24 thereunder, the person may bring a written petition to the
25 [Department of Public Utility Control] Office of Consumer Counsel
26 alleging the failure or refusal. The [department] office shall investigate
27 and, not more than sixty days after receipt of a petition, (1) if
28 appropriate, issue an order prescribing the service to be furnished by
29 the company, the conditions under which and maximum rates or
30 charges at which the service shall be furnished or (2) order that a
31 hearing be held on the matter or that the matter be set for alternative
32 dispute resolution. If at any time during such sixty-day period, any
33 party in interest requests a hearing, the [department] office shall, after
34 notice to all parties and not more than ninety days after receiving the
35 request, hold a hearing and, if appropriate, issue an order prescribing
36 the service to be furnished by the company and the conditions under
37 which and maximum rates or charges at which the service shall be
38 furnished.

39 Sec. 2. Section 16-245t of the general statutes is repealed and the
40 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2008*):

41 (a) The [Department of Public Utility Control] Office of Consumer
42 Counsel shall be responsible for receiving and acting upon customer
43 inquiries and complaints regarding electric suppliers, as defined in
44 section 16-1 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes. The
45 [department] office shall establish a toll-free telephone number for
46 such purposes. Customers of any electric supplier having complaints
47 regarding disputed bills, terminations of service or adequacy of service
48 may bring their complaints to the [department] office pursuant to any
49 provision in section 16-20, as amended by this act, sections 16-262c to

50 16-262j, inclusive, of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes or the
51 regulations adopted to implement those sections.

52 (b) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed so as to
53 restrict the right of any person to pursue any other remedy available to
54 the person under law.

55 Sec. 3. Section 16-247t of the general statutes is repealed and the
56 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2008*):

57 (a) For purposes of this section, "carrier" means a cellular mobile
58 telephone carrier or a reseller of service provided by a cellular mobile
59 telephone carrier.

60 (b) The [Department of Public Utility Control] Office of Consumer
61 Counsel shall receive customer inquiries and complaints regarding
62 cellular mobile telephone service in the state. For purposes of this
63 section, complaints do not include customer complaints not previously
64 referred to such customer's carrier. [Not later than January 1, 2006, the
65 Department of Public Utility Control] The Office of Consumer Counsel
66 shall provide a toll-free telephone number and Internet web site at
67 which members of the public may submit to the [department] office
68 their information inquiries and complaints regarding activations,
69 disputed bills, collections, deactivations, equipment problems,
70 network trouble and other service problems. The [department] office
71 shall also accept such inquiries and complaints by mail.

72 (c) [Not later than January 1, 2006, each] Each carrier shall notify
73 each of its customers concerning such toll-free telephone number,
74 Internet web site address and the address of the department for
75 submitting such inquiries and complaints. [Beginning not later than
76 January 1, 2006, and ending on January 1, 2008, each such carrier shall
77 disclose to all new customers at the point of sale or contract the toll-
78 free telephone number, Internet web site address and the address of
79 the department for submitting such inquiries and complaints.]

80 [(d) Not later than March 1, 2007, and March 1, 2008, the department
81 shall prepare a report for the preceding calendar year containing
82 information on carrier customer inquiries and complaints. Such report
83 shall include information on consumer complaints regarding
84 activations, disputed bills, collections, deactivations, equipment
85 problems, network trouble and other service problems of carriers as
86 may be relevant for the purposes of the report, provided the report
87 may not include any information that may be a violation of section 42-
88 110b. The information may include an analysis of such complaints and
89 recommendations to address problems raised by customers. The
90 department shall make the report available to the Attorney General
91 and the public, on request and on the department's Internet web site.

92 (e) The department shall, within available appropriations, carry out
93 its responsibilities under this section.]

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2008</i>	16-20
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2008</i>	16-245t
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2008</i>	16-247t

Statement of Purpose:

To charge the Office of Consumer Counsel with addressing utility customer service complaints.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]