
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5641

AN ACT CONCERNING PROCEDURES TO PREVENT UTILITY SERVICE TERMINATIONS AT RENTAL PROPERTIES.

SUMMARY

This bill requires gas companies (e.g., Yankee Gas) and electric distribution companies (i.e., Eversource and United Illuminating) to agree to take certain actions when a residential dwelling owner (i.e., landlord) certifies that he or she owns a dwelling that the company serves and bills in someone else's name (i.e., a tenant). More specifically, the companies must agree to:

1. transfer the service for the dwelling to the landlord's name, upon request, whenever the company intends to terminate service to the dwelling;
2. notify the landlord by mail within 72 hours after transferring the service; and
3. if the company fails to transfer service as requested and instead terminates it, compensate the landlord for any resulting damage to the dwelling, including damage caused by burst pipes.

The bill requires that landlord requests be written in a form set by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). They must include (1) certification that the landlord owns the dwelling subject to the request and (2) the landlord's mailing address that the company must use for notifications about transferring service.

Under the bill, a landlord seeking compensation must send a demand for compensation to the applicable company with any evidence the landlord chooses to provide. The company must either pay the compensation or deny liability within 30 days after receiving the

demand. (The bill does not specify what happens if the company denies the demand.)

The bill also (1) prohibits a company from disclosing to the landlord why it otherwise intends to terminate service to the dwelling and (2) specifies that it does not require the landlord to pay the account balance or arrearage that the tenant accrued for the dwelling before service was transferred to the landlord's name.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

COMMITTEE ACTION

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/14/2023)