



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 302

January Session, 2023

Substitute House Bill No. 5641

House of Representatives, March 29, 2023

The Committee on Energy and Technology reported through REP. STEINBERG of the 136th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

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

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) Each gas company and
2 electric distribution company, as such terms are defined in section 16-1
3 of the general statutes, shall, upon request of a person who certifies that
4 such person is the owner of a residential dwelling to which the company
5 provides service that is billed to a person other than such requestor,
6 agree to:

7 (1) Transfer gas or electric service, as applicable, to such requestor's
8 name, whenever the company intends to terminate service to such
9 dwelling absent a request made pursuant to this section;

10 (2) Notify such requestor by United States mail not later than seventy-
11 two hours after any such transfer of service; and

12 (3) Pay compensation to such requestor for damage that results from
13 a termination of service to the dwelling, including, but not limited to,

14 damage caused by burst pipes, if the company fails to transfer service in
15 accordance with such request.

16 (b) Any request made pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall
17 be in writing in a form prescribed by the Public Utilities Regulatory
18 Authority. Such request shall include: (1) A certification that the
19 requestor is the owner of the residential dwelling that is the subject of
20 the request; and (2) the mailing address of the requestor that shall be
21 used by such gas or electric distribution company, as applicable, to mail
22 notice in accordance with subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section.

23 (c) Any requestor who seeks compensation pursuant to subdivision
24 (3) of subsection (a) of this section shall send a demand for
25 compensation in writing to the applicable gas or electric distribution
26 company or companies, together with any evidence such requestor
27 chooses to provide. Any company that receives such demand shall, not
28 later than thirty days after receipt, either pay the compensation
29 demanded or deny liability.

30 (d) No gas company or electric distribution company may disclose to
31 the requestor the reason the company intends to terminate service
32 absent a request made pursuant to this section.

33 (e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require such
34 requestor to pay an account balance or arrearage of any customer who
35 was billed for service at such residential dwelling before the transfer of
36 service to such requestor's name.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | July 1, 2023 | New section |

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

The title was changed.

ET Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill primarily deals with the relationship between rental property owners and utility companies and thus there is no fiscal impact

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

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)