

4449

2013-2014 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

April 1, 2013

Introduced by Sen. LIBOUS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications

AN ACT to amend the public service law, in relation to requiring providers of electric, gas, steam, telephone and cable television service to use a uniform format, and uniform terminologies and definitions in bills for residential service; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon the expiration thereof

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "uniform utility consumer comparison act".
3 S 2. Subdivision 1 of section 44 of the public service law, as added
4 by chapter 713 of the laws of 1981, is amended to read as follows:
5 1. Every utility corporation or municipality shall assure that bills
6 for service to residential customers adequately explain the charges for
7 service in clear and understandable form and language. FURTHERMORE, SUCH
8 BILLS SHALL UTILIZE THE FORMAT, TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS ESTABLISHED
9 THEREFOR BY THE COMMISSION. The commission [may] SHALL, from time to
10 time, specify [the] A UNIFORM form and content [of] FOR such bills to
11 further the objectives of this subdivision. SUCH FORM AND CONTENT SHALL
12 REQUIRE THE USE OF SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS.
13 S 3. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 92-g
14 to read as follows:
15 S 92-G. UNIFORMITY IN RESIDENTIAL BILLS. 1. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS
16 SECTION, "PROVIDER OF TELEPHONE SERVICES" MEANS A TELEPHONE CORPORATION
17 THAT PROVIDES INTRASTATE INTER-LATA, INTRA-LATA OR LOCAL EXCHANGE TELE-
18 PHONE SERVICE TO END-USE CUSTOMERS.
19 2. EVERY PROVIDER OF TELEPHONE SERVICES SHALL ASSURE THAT BILLS FOR
20 TELEPHONE SERVICE TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS ADEQUATELY EXPLAIN THE CHARG-
21 ES FOR SERVICE AND ALL OTHER CHARGES IN CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE FORM

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [] is old law to be omitted.

LBD10036-03-3

1 AND LANGUAGE. FURTHERMORE, SUCH BILLS SHALL UTILIZE THE FORMAT, TERMI-
2 NOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS ESTABLISHED THEREFOR BY THE COMMISSION.

3 3. THE COMMISSION SHALL ESTABLISH A UNIFORM FORMAT FOR BILLS ISSUED TO
4 RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS BY PROVIDERS OF TELEPHONE SERVICES. SUCH FORMAT
5 SHALL REQUIRE THE USE OF SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS.

6 S 4. Section 224-b of the public service law, as added by chapter 359
7 of the laws of 2009, is amended to read as follows:

8 S 224-b. Cable bills. 1. At the time service is initiated to a resi-
9 dential customer and at least once a year thereafter, every telephone
10 corporation, as defined in subdivision seventeen of section two of this
11 chapter, and every cable television company, as defined in section two
12 hundred twelve of this article that provides cable service to customers
13 in New York shall provide its customers with a notice that billing
14 statements are available in a large print format. Upon written request
15 by a customer, every telephone corporation and cable television company
16 shall provide the customer's billing statements in large print format no
17 later than sixty days after the date upon which the request is received
18 by the telephone corporation and cable television company. The
19 provisions of this section shall apply only to printed statements. For
20 the purposes of this section, "large print" means a font size of sixteen
21 or larger to illuminate billing information.

22 2. EVERY TELEPHONE CORPORATION AND CABLE TELEVISION COMPANY SHALL
23 ASSURE THAT BILLS FOR CABLE SERVICE TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS ADEQUATELY
24 EXPLAIN THE CHARGES FOR SERVICE AND ALL OTHER CHARGES IN CLEAR AND
25 UNDERSTANDABLE FORM AND LANGUAGE. FURTHERMORE, SUCH BILLS SHALL UTILIZE
26 THE FORMAT, TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS ESTABLISHED THEREFOR BY THE
27 COMMISSION.

28 3. THE COMMISSION SHALL ESTABLISH A UNIFORM FORMAT FOR BILLS ISSUED TO
29 RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS FOR CABLE SERVICE. SUCH FORMAT SHALL REQUIRE THE
30 USE OF SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS.

31 S 5. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be
32 deemed repealed 5 years after it shall take effect, except that section
33 two of this act, subdivision 2 of section 92-g of the public service
34 law, as added by section three of this act, and subdivision 2 of section
35 224-b of the public service law, as added by section four of this act,
36 shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after this act shall
37 have become a law.