S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

6757--A

Cal. No. 320

2013-2014 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

April 17, 2013

Introduced by M. of A. DINOWITZ -- read once and referred to the Committee on Consumer Affairs and Protection -- advanced to a third reading, amended and ordered reprinted, retaining its place on the order of third reading

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:

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "uniform utility consumer comparison act".

S 2. Subdivision 1 of section 44 of the public service law, as added by chapter 713 of the laws of 1981, is amended to read as follows:

1. Every utility corporation or municipality shall assure that bills for service to residential customers adequately explain the charges for service in clear and understandable form and language. FURTHERMORE, SUCH BILLS SHALL UTILIZE THE FORMAT, TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS ESTABLISHED THEREFOR BY THE COMMISSION. The commission [may] SHALL, from time to time, specify [the] A UNIFORM form and content [of] FOR such bills to further the objectives of this subdivision. SUCH FORM AND CONTENT SHALL REQUIRE THE USE OF SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS.

S 3. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 92-h to read as follows:

S 92-H. UNIFORMITY IN RESIDENTIAL BILLS. 1. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, "PROVIDER OF TELEPHONE SERVICES" MEANS A TELEPHONE CORPORATION THAT PROVIDES INTRASTATE INTER-LATA, INTRA-LATA OR LOCAL EXCHANGE TELEPHONE SERVICE TO END-USE CUSTOMERS.

2. EVERY PROVIDER OF TELEPHONE SERVICES SHALL ASSURE THAT BILLS FOR TELEPHONE SERVICE TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS ADEQUATELY EXPLAIN THE CHARG-

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

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ES FOR SERVICE AND ALL OTHER CHARGES IN CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE FORM AND LANGUAGE. FURTHERMORE, SUCH BILLS SHALL UTILIZE THE FORMAT, TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS ESTABLISHED THEREFOR BY THE COMMISSION.

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

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

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

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

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

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