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I N   S E N A T E

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Introduced by Sens. LATIMER, DILAN, ESPAILLAT, MONTGOMERY, SAMPSON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- recommitted to the Committee on Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the economic development law and the public service law, in relation to small business energy assistance and advocacy services

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

1     Section 1. The legislature hereby finds and declares that rising ener-  
2     gy costs present a significant barrier to the economic viability of New  
3     York's small businesses, a crucial sector of the state's economy. Small  
4     businesses can least afford the time and cost associated with seeking  
5     opportunities to conserve energy, utilize energy efficient products and  
6     processes and gain access to renewable sources of energy. The viability  
7     of small businesses and the overall economic and environmental status of  
8     New York state will be enhanced by the development, expansion and  
9     promotion of accessible and affordable programs to assist small busi-  
10    nesses in energy conservation, energy efficiency, and increased use of  
11    renewable resources, and by ensuring equitable treatment of small busi-  
12    nesses in the proceedings of energy-related regulatory agencies.

13    The legislature hereby establishes a small business energy assistance  
14    and advocacy services program as part of the division for small business  
15    within the New York state department of economic development to assist  
16    small businesses in accessing energy conservation, energy efficiency and  
17    renewable energy programs available through public and private sources,  
18    and to advocate for the initiation and expansion of such programs and

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

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1 for equitable treatment of small businesses in regulatory proceedings  
2 related to energy.

3 S 2. The economic development law is amended by adding a new section  
4 138-a to read as follows:

5 S 138-A. SMALL BUSINESS ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY SERVICES  
6 PROGRAM. 1. THERE IS HEREBY ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE DIVISION A SMALL  
7 BUSINESS ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY SERVICES PROGRAM.

8 2. THE SMALL BUSINESS ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY SERVICES PROGRAM,  
9 DIRECTLY AND IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER DIVISIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND  
10 WITH OTHER AGENCIES OF THE STATE, FEDERAL AGENCIES OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS,  
11 SHALL:

12 A. SOLICIT INPUT FROM SMALL BUSINESSES AND FROM ORGANIZATIONS REPRES-  
13 ENTING SMALL BUSINESSES, SUCH AS TRADE ASSOCIATIONS OR OTHER ENTITIES,  
14 REGARDING THE ENERGY ASSISTANCE NEEDS OF SMALL BUSINESSES;

15 B. WITH SUCH INPUT AND THE ASSISTANCE OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY  
16 BOARD AND OTHER APPROPRIATE STATE AGENCIES, IDENTIFY ISSUES RELATING TO  
17 ENERGY AVAILABILITY, AFFORDABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY AFFECTING SMALL  
18 BUSINESSES AND ASSIST THE ADVISORY BOARD AND THE DIVISION IN MAKING  
19 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND PROGRAMMATIC ACTIONS TO  
20 ADDRESS SUCH ISSUES;

21 C. COORDINATE WITH ENTITIES INCLUDING THE NEW YORK STATE ENERGY  
22 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, THE POWER AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF  
23 NEW YORK AND OTHER APPROPRIATE PUBLIC UTILITY AUTHORITIES ESTABLISHED  
24 PURSUANT TO ARTICLE FIVE OF THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES LAW, THE PUBLIC  
25 SERVICE COMMISSION, INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ENTI-  
26 TIES TO FACILITATE AND PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES AND  
27 ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTING SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPE-  
28 MENTATION OF ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS;

29 D. PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NEW YORK STATE ENERGY  
30 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, THE POWER AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF  
31 NEW YORK AND OTHER PUBLIC UTILITY AUTHORITIES ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO  
32 ARTICLE FIVE OF THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES LAW, THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMIS-  
33 SION, INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITIES AND OTHER ENTITIES REGARDING THE DEVELOP-  
34 MENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND ON THE IMPACT  
35 OF STATE ENERGY POLICY ON SMALL BUSINESSES;

36 E. PROVIDE TO SMALL BUSINESSES INFORMATION AND MATERIALS ON ENERGY  
37 ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, COOPERATIVE FUEL PURCHASING EFFORTS AND OTHER  
38 PROGRAMS TO MAINTAIN THE AFFORDABILITY OF ENERGY, AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO  
39 SUCH INFORMATION AND MATERIALS ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE; AND

40 F. REFER SMALL BUSINESSES TO SPECIALISTS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSIST-  
41 ANCE ON AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES, PROCESS CHANGES, PRODUCTS  
42 AND OPERATIONAL METHODS TO ACHIEVE ENERGY SAVINGS.

43 3. A. THE SMALL BUSINESS ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY SERVICES  
44 PROGRAM SHALL REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF SMALL BUSINESSES BEFORE THE  
45 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION PURSUANT TO SECTION TWENTY-FOUR-C, SEVENTY-ONE  
46 OR EIGHTY-FOUR OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE LAW, AND SHALL BE AUTHORIZED TO  
47 INITIATE, INTERVENE IN OR PARTICIPATE IN ANY PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE  
48 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION AND IN ANY OTHER SUCH ENERGY-RELATED  
49 PROCEEDINGS AS THE DIVISION DEEMS TO BE NECESSARY OR APPROPRIATE.

50 B. THE SMALL BUSINESS ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY SERVICES PROGRAM  
51 SHALL ADVOCATE BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION AND OTHER STATE AND  
52 FEDERAL REGULATORY AGENCIES FOR THE ADOPTION OF APPROPRIATE REGULATIONS  
53 PROVIDING FOR EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF SMALL BUSINESSES IN ENERGY-RELATED  
54 POLICIES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO EXTENDING REASONABLE CONSUMER  
55 PROTECTIONS TO SMALL BUSINESSES IN ENERGY-RELATED MATTERS.

1 S 3. The public service law is amended by adding a new section 24-c to  
2 read as follows:

3 S 24-C. NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO DIVISION PRIOR TO RATE INCREASE. 1.  
4 NOTWITHSTANDING ANY INCONSISTENT GENERAL, SPECIAL OR LOCAL LAW OR RULE  
5 OR REGULATION TO THE CONTRARY, THE COMMISSION SHALL TO THE EXTENT THE  
6 DIVISION SHALL SO REQUEST IN ANY CASES OR CLASS OF CASES, GIVE NOTICE TO  
7 THE DIVISION OF ANY FILED STATEMENT PROPOSING TO MODIFY OR INCREASE  
8 RATES, SERVICES, SCHEDULE OF RATES OR ANY OTHER RATING RULE OR TO ADOPT  
9 OR AMEND ANY RATE OR SERVICE RULES OR REGULATIONS WITHIN FIVE DAYS AFTER  
10 THE COMMISSION SHALL HAVE RECEIVED SUCH STATEMENT FROM ANY UTILITY  
11 SUBJECT TO ITS JURISDICTION; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT IN LIEU OF GIVING  
12 SUCH NOTICE, THE COMMISSION MAY DIRECT THAT THE UTILITY GIVE SUCH NOTICE  
13 TO THE DIVISION. THE COMMISSION SHALL DIRECTLY NOTIFY THE DIVISION OF  
14 ANY SUCH CASE THAT IS NOT INITIATED BY A UTILITY.

15 2. IN ANY SUCH CASE IN WHICH THE DIVISION SHALL FILE WITH THE COMMIS-  
16 SION A STATEMENT OF INTENT TO BE A PARTY, THE DIVISION SHALL HAVE AND IN  
17 ITS DISCRETION MAY EXERCISE ALL THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF A PARTY.

18 3. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, THE TERM "DIVISION" SHALL MEAN  
19 THE DIVISION FOR SMALL BUSINESS ESTABLISHED BY ARTICLE FOUR-B OF THE  
20 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LAW, AND THE TERM "COMMISSION" SHALL MEAN THE  
21 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

22 S 4. Section 71 of the public service law, as amended by chapter 521  
23 of the laws of 2013, is amended to read as follows:

24 S 71. Complaints as to quality and price of gas and electricity;  
25 investigation by commission; forms of complaints. Upon the complaint in  
26 writing of the mayor of a city, the trustees of a village, the town  
27 board of a town or the chief executive officer or the legislative body  
28 of a county in which a person or corporation is authorized to manufac-  
29 ture, convey, transport, sell or supply gas or electricity for heat,  
30 light or power, or upon the complaint in writing of not less than twen-  
31 ty-five customers or purchasers of such gas or electricity, or upon the  
32 complaint in writing of the department of state OR THE DIVISION FOR  
33 SMALL BUSINESS, or upon a complaint of a gas corporation or electrical  
34 corporation supplying or transmitting said gas or electricity, as to the  
35 illuminating or heating power, purity or pressure or the rates, charges  
36 or classifications of service of gas, the efficiency of the electric  
37 incandescent lamp supply, the voltage of the current supplied for light,  
38 heat or power, or the rates charged or classification of service of  
39 electricity sold and delivered in such municipality, or as to the extent  
40 or duration of a disruption in gas or electricity service, the commis-  
41 sion shall investigate as to the cause for such complaint. When such  
42 complaint is made, the commission may, by its agents, examiners and  
43 inspectors, inspect the works, system, plant, devices, appliances and  
44 methods used by such person or corporation in manufacturing, transmit-  
45 ting and supplying such gas or electricity, and may examine or cause to  
46 be examined the books and papers of such person, or corporation pertain-  
47 ing to the manufacture, sale, transmitting and supplying of such gas or  
48 electricity. The form and contents of complaints made as provided in  
49 this section shall be prescribed by the commission. Such complaints  
50 shall be signed by the officers, or by the customers, purchasers or  
51 subscribers making them, who must add to their signatures their places  
52 of residence, by street and number, if any. The commission shall publish  
53 the form and instructions for completing the form on the commission's  
54 website.

55 S 5. Section 84 of the public service law, as amended by section 49 of  
56 part A of chapter 62 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as follows:

1 S 84. Complaints as to service and price of steam heat; investigation  
2 by commission; forms of complaints. Upon the complaint in writing of the  
3 mayor of the city, the trustees of a village or the town board of a town  
4 in which a person or corporation is authorized to manufacture, sell or  
5 supply steam for heat or power, or upon the complaint in writing of not  
6 less than fifty customers or purchasers of such steam heat in cities of  
7 the first or second class, or of not less than twenty-five in cities of  
8 the third class, or of not less than ten elsewhere, or upon the  
9 complaint in writing of the department of state OR THE DIVISION FOR  
10 SMALL BUSINESS, as to the price, pressure or efficiency of steam  
11 supplied for heat or power, sold and delivered in such municipality, the  
12 commission shall investigate as to the cause for such complaint. When  
13 such complaint is made, the commission may, by its agents, examiners and  
14 inspectors, inspect the work, system, plant, devices, appliances and  
15 methods used by such person or corporation in manufacturing, transmit-  
16 ting and supplying such steam, and may examine or cause to be examined  
17 the books and papers of such person or corporation pertaining to the  
18 manufacture, sale, transmitting and supplying of such steam. The form  
19 and contents of complaints made as provided in this section shall be  
20 prescribed by the commission. Such complaint shall be signed by the  
21 officers, or by the customers, purchasers or subscribers making them,  
22 who must add to their signatures their place of residence, by street and  
23 number, if any.

24 S 6. This act shall take effect September 1, 2015. Effective imme-  
25 diately the department of economic development and the public service  
26 commission shall be authorized to take any and all actions necessary to  
27 fully implement the provisions of this act on such effective date.