

STATE OF NEW YORK

232

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 9, 2019

Introduced by Sen. KENNEDY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business

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

21 § 2. The economic development law is amended by adding a new section
22 138-a to read as follows:

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

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1 § 138-a. Small business energy assistance and advocacy services
2 program. 1. There is hereby established within the division a small
3 business energy assistance and advocacy services program.

4 2. The small business energy assistance and advocacy services program,
5 directly and in conjunction with other divisions of the department and
6 with other agencies of the state, federal agencies or local governments,
7 shall:

8 a. solicit input from small businesses and from organizations repres-
9 enting small businesses, such as trade associations or other entities,
10 regarding the energy assistance needs of small businesses;

11 b. with such input and the assistance of the small business advisory
12 board and other appropriate state agencies, identify issues relating to
13 energy availability, affordability and sustainability affecting small
14 businesses and assist the advisory board and the division in making
15 recommendations for legislative, regulatory and programmatic actions to
16 address such issues;

17 c. coordinate with entities including the New York state energy
18 research and development authority, the power authority of the state of
19 New York and other appropriate public utility authorities established
20 pursuant to article five of the public authorities law, the public
21 service commission, investor-owned utilities and other appropriate enti-
22 ties to facilitate and promote the participation of small businesses and
23 associations representing small businesses in the development and imple-
24 mentation of energy assistance programs;

25 d. provide guidance and recommendations to the New York state energy
26 research and development authority, the power authority of the state of
27 New York and other public utility authorities established pursuant to
28 article five of the public authorities law, the public service commis-
29 sion, investor-owned utilities and other entities regarding the develop-
30 ment and implementation of energy assistance programs and on the impact
31 of state energy policy on small businesses;

32 e. provide to small businesses information and materials on energy
33 assistance programs, cooperative fuel purchasing efforts and other
34 programs to maintain the affordability of energy, and provide access to
35 such information and materials on the department's website; and

36 f. refer small businesses to specialists for information and assist-
37 ance on affordable alternative technologies, process changes, products
38 and operational methods to achieve energy savings.

39 3. The small business energy assistance and advocacy services program
40 shall advocate before the public service commission and other state and
41 federal regulatory agencies for the adoption of appropriate regulations
42 providing for equitable treatment of small businesses in energy-related
43 policies, including but not limited to extending reasonable consumer
44 protections to small businesses in energy-related matters.

45 § 3. Section 71 of the public service law, as amended by chapter 521
46 of the laws of 2013, is amended to read as follows:

47 § 71. Complaints as to quality and price of gas and electricity;
48 investigation by commission; forms of complaints. Upon the complaint in
49 writing of the mayor of a city, the trustees of a village, the town
50 board of a town or the chief executive officer or the legislative body
51 of a county in which a person or corporation is authorized to manufac-
52 ture, convey, transport, sell or supply gas or electricity for heat,
53 light or power, or upon the complaint in writing of not less than twen-
54 ty-five customers or purchasers of such gas or electricity, or upon the
55 complaint in writing of the department of state or the division for
56 small business, or upon a complaint of a gas corporation or electrical

1 corporation supplying or transmitting said gas or electricity, as to the
2 illuminating or heating power, purity or pressure or the rates, charges
3 or classifications of service of gas, the efficiency of the electric
4 incandescent lamp supply, the voltage of the current supplied for light,
5 heat or power, or the rates charged or classification of service of
6 electricity sold and delivered in such municipality, or as to the extent
7 or duration of a disruption in gas or electricity service, the commis-
8 sion shall investigate as to the cause for such complaint. When such
9 complaint is made, the commission may, by its agents, examiners and
10 inspectors, inspect the works, system, plant, devices, appliances and
11 methods used by such person or corporation in manufacturing, transmit-
12 ting and supplying such gas or electricity, and may examine or cause to
13 be examined the books and papers of such person, or corporation pertain-
14 ing to the manufacture, sale, transmitting and supplying of such gas or
15 electricity. The form and contents of complaints made as provided in
16 this section shall be prescribed by the commission. Such complaints
17 shall be signed by the officers, or by the customers, purchasers or
18 subscribers making them, who must add to their signatures their places
19 of residence, by street and number, if any. The commission shall publish
20 the form and instructions for completing the form on the commission's
21 website.

22 § 4. Section 84 of the public service law, as amended by section 49 of
23 part A of chapter 62 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as follows:

24 § 84. Complaints as to service and price of steam heat; investigation
25 by commission; forms of complaints. Upon the complaint in writing of the
26 mayor of the city, the trustees of a village or the town board of a town
27 in which a person or corporation is authorized to manufacture, sell or
28 supply steam for heat or power, or upon the complaint in writing of not
29 less than fifty customers or purchasers of such steam heat in cities of
30 the first or second class, or of not less than twenty-five in cities of
31 the third class, or of not less than ten elsewhere, or upon the
32 complaint in writing of the department of state or the division for
33 small business, as to the price, pressure or efficiency of steam
34 supplied for heat or power, sold and delivered in such municipality, the
35 commission shall investigate as to the cause for such complaint. When
36 such complaint is made, the commission may, by its agents, examiners and
37 inspectors, inspect the work, system, plant, devices, appliances and
38 methods used by such person or corporation in manufacturing, transmit-
39 ting and supplying such steam, and may examine or cause to be examined
40 the books and papers of such person or corporation pertaining to the
41 manufacture, sale, transmitting and supplying of such steam. The form
42 and contents of complaints made as provided in this section shall be
43 prescribed by the commission. Such complaint shall be signed by the
44 officers, or by the customers, purchasers or subscribers making them,
45 who must add to their signatures their place of residence, by street and
46 number, if any.

47 § 5. This act shall take effect September 1, 2021. Effective imme-
48 diately the department of economic development and the public service
49 commission shall be authorized to take any and all actions necessary to
50 fully implement the provisions of this act on such effective date.