

STATE OF NEW YORK

927--A

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 6, 2021

Introduced by Sens. KAPLAN, MAYER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the public service law, the public authorities law and the general business law, in relation to requiring utility companies maintain a toll free number for reporting service outages

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The public service law is amended by adding a new section
2 119-d to read as follows:

3 § 119-d. Toll free number for service outages. 1. Any gas corpo-
4 ration, electric corporation, gas and electric corporation, water corpo-
5 ration, steam corporation or a municipality rendering equivalent utility
6 services is required to establish, provide and maintain a toll free
7 phone number for consumers of such utility to call for reporting service
8 outages. Such toll free number shall:

9 a. be attended twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week;

10 b. have the capacity to adequately address a surge in phone call
11 volume during an emergency situation or extreme weather conditions;

12 c. be posted clearly and conspicuously on the homepage of the utility
13 company's website; and

14 d. be posted clearly and conspicuously on the first page of each
15 consumer's billing statement.

16 2. The failure to comply with the provisions in this section shall
17 subject any gas corporation, electric corporation, gas and electric
18 corporation, water corporation, steam corporation or a municipality
19 rendering equivalent utility services to the penalties authorized in
20 section twenty-five of this chapter.

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

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1 3. Any municipality shall have the opportunity to petition the commis-
2 sion for an exemption from the requirements of this section if such
3 municipality can show that such requirements are unduly burdensome.

4 § 2. The public authorities law is amended by adding a new section
5 1020-mm to read as follows:

6 § 1020-mm. Toll free number for service outages. 1. The service
7 provider shall be required to establish, provide and maintain a toll
8 free phone number for consumers of service provided by the service
9 provider to call for reporting service outages. Such toll free number
10 shall:

11 (a) be attended twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week;

12 (b) have the capacity to adequately address a surge in phone call
13 volume during an emergency situation or extreme weather conditions;

14 (c) be posted clearly and conspicuously on the homepage of the author-
15 ity's website; and

16 (d) be posted clearly and conspicuously on the first page of each
17 consumer's billing statement.

18 2. The failure to comply with the provisions of this section shall
19 subject the service provider to the penalties authorized in section
20 twenty-five of the public service law.

21 § 3. The general business law is amended by adding a new section
22 399-yyyy to read as follows:

23 § 399-yyyy. Toll free number for cable television and internet service
24 outages. 1. Any cable television or internet service provider rendering
25 equivalent utility services is required to establish, provide and main-
26 tain a toll free phone number for consumers of such utility to call for
27 reporting service outages. Such toll free number shall:

28 (a) be attended twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week;

29 (b) have the capacity to adequately address a surge in phone call
30 volume during an emergency situation or extreme weather conditions;

31 (c) be posted clearly and conspicuously on the homepage of the cable
32 television or internet service provider's website; and

33 (d) be posted clearly and conspicuously on the first page of each
34 consumer's billing statement.

35 2. The failure to comply with the provisions in this section shall
36 subject any cable television or internet service provider rendering
37 equivalent utility services to the penalties authorized in section twen-
38 ty-five of the public service law.

39 § 4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall
40 have become a law.