STATE OF NEW YORK

7490

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

May 31, 2023

Introduced by Sens. SKOUFIS, MAYER -- 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, 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:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(c) be posted clearly and conspicuously on the homepage of the authority's website; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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