## **HOUSE BILL 1473**

C5 7lr2749

By: Delegates Jalisi, McDonough, McMillan, and Sophocleus

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2017

Assigned to: Economic Matters

AN ACT concerning

## A BILL ENTITLED

2	Gas and Electric Companies - Deposit Charges
3	FOR the purpose of prohibiting a gas company or an electric company from imposing a
4	certain deposit requirement on certain customers; prohibiting a gas company or an
5	electric company from terminating certain service for failure to pay all or part of a
6	deposit under certain circumstances; providing for the application of this Act; and
7	generally relating to electric utilities and customer billing.
8	BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
9	Article – Public Utilities
10	Section 7–305
11	Annotated Code of Maryland
12	(2010 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)
13	BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
14	Article – Public Utilities
15	Section 7–307
16	Annotated Code of Maryland

- 17 (2010 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)
- 18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
- 19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:
- 20 Article Public Utilities
- 21 7–305.
- 22 (a) A gas company or electric company may bill its customers for gas, electricity, 23 or any other service it renders only on the basis of the net total cost of the service under the 24 applicable rate that is filed for that service.

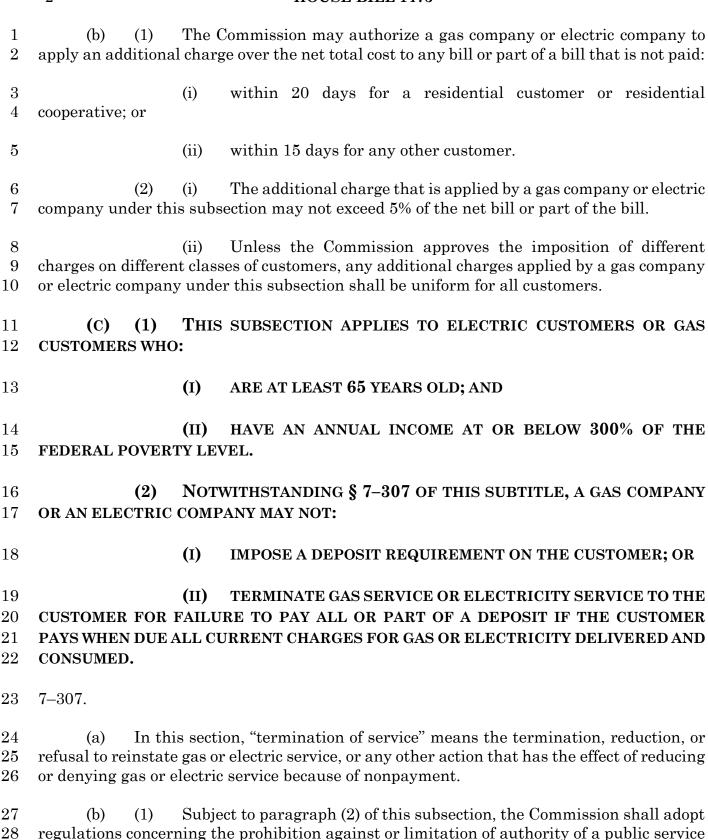
EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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company to terminate service for gas or electricity to a low income residential customer

during the heating season for nonpayment.

1 (2)In adopting the regulations required under paragraph (1) of this 2 subsection, the Commission shall consider and may include provisions relating to: 3 the circumstances under which service may and may not be 4 limited or terminated: 5 (ii) the minimum heating levels required to maintain life, health, 6 and safety; 7 the medical, age, disabling, or other individual characteristics (iii) that are relevant to a prohibition against or limitation on the termination of service; 8 9 (iv) the availability of and qualification for State and federal energy 10 assistance: 11 (v) the financial eligibility standards relevant to a prohibition 12 against or limitation on the termination of service; 13 the availability and appropriateness of equipment designed to (vi) limit the flow of service for gas or electricity; 14 15 (vii) the short-term and long-term alternative payment plans, for appropriate customers whose accounts are in arrears, that are best designed: 16 1. to allow present and future continuation of service; and 17 18 2. to encourage full payment over a period of time; 19 (viii) the methods that a public service company might use before and 20 during the heating season to anticipate customer nonpayment, to assist those customers, 21and to avoid termination of service: 22 (ix) the procedures that a public service company uses to mitigate the 23problems of termination of service to customers, including customer contact; 24(x) the procedure that a public service company shall follow before 25termination of service to a customer to avoid a threat to life, health, or safety; 26 the appropriate customer notice before the termination of (xi) 27 service: 28the appropriate opportunity and procedure for a customer to (xii) contest a proposed termination of service: 29

(xiii) the existence of other circumstances that because of an

emergency, might justify a prohibition against or a limitation on the termination of service;

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and

$\frac{1}{2}$	(xiv) the economic implication of any restriction on termination of service.
3 4 5	(c) (1) In accordance with § 2–1246 of the State Government Article, on obefore September 1 of each year, the Commission shall report to the General Assembly or terminations of service by public service companies during the previous heating season.
6 7	(2) The report shall include information in sufficient detail to indicate the effect of the terminations of service on various categories of customers, including:
8	(i) income levels;
9	(ii) geographic areas;
10	(iii) energy assistance recipients; and
11 12 13	(iv) any other category that the Commission determines is relevan to evaluate how the State may best address the problem of assuring adequate gas and electric service for low income residential customers.
14 15	SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2017.