

Chapter 617

(Senate Bill 428)

AN ACT concerning

Public Utilities – Annual Reports

FOR the purpose of altering the due dates of certain annual reports prepared by the Public Service Commission; altering the due date of a certain report by the Department of Housing and Community Development relating to the Electric Universal Service Program; and generally relating to public utilities and annual reports.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Public Utilities

Section 2–122, 7–211(k), and 7–512.1(c) and (d)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2020 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Utilities

2–122.

(a) (1) On or before [the third Wednesday of March] **MAY 1** of each year, the Commission shall publish an annual report that summarizes the activities of the Commission that includes:

(i) a summary of each regulation, opinion, or order that the Commission adopted, entered, or passed during the year; and

(ii) any other information that the Commission considers of value.

(2) The Commission shall send a copy of the report to the Governor and, subject to § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly.

(b) Each year, the Commission shall publish a report that includes:

(1) the progress of the residential conservation service plan;

(2) Commission activities to moderate peak electric demand; and

(3) energy conservation measures taken by gas companies and electric companies in the State to reduce electrical and natural gas demand.

7-211.

(k) On or before [~~March~~] **MAY** 1 of each year, the Commission, in consultation with the Maryland Energy Administration, shall report, subject to § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on:

(1) the status of programs and services to encourage and promote the efficient use and conservation of energy, including an evaluation of the impact of the programs and services that are directed to low-income communities, low- to moderate-income communities to the extent possible, and other particular classes of ratepayers;

(2) a recommendation for the appropriate funding level to adequately fund these programs and services; and

(3) in accordance with subsection (c) of this section, the per capita electricity consumption and the peak demand for the previous calendar year.

7-512.1.

(c) (1) On or before [~~December~~] **JANUARY** 1 of each year, the Commission shall report, subject to § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on the electric universal service program, including:

(i) subject to subsection (e) of this section, a recommendation on the total amount of funds for the program for the following fiscal year based on:

1. the level of participation in and the amounts expended on bill assistance and arrearage retirement during the preceding fiscal year;

2. how bill assistance and arrearage retirement payments were calculated during the preceding fiscal year;

3. the projected needs for the bill assistance and the arrearage retirement components for the next fiscal year; and

4. the amount of any bill assistance or arrearage retirement surplus carried over in the electric universal service program fund under subsection (f)(6)(i) of this section;

(ii) for bill assistance, the total amount of need, as determined by the Commission, for electric customers with annual incomes at or below 175% of the federal poverty level and the basis for this determination;

(iii) the amount of funds needed, as determined by the Commission, to retire arrearages for electric customers who have not received assistance in retiring

arrearrages under the electric universal service program within the preceding 7 fiscal years, and the basis for this determination;

(iv) the amount of funds needed, as determined by the Commission, for bill assistance and arrearage retirement, respectively, for customers for whom income limitations may be waived under subsection (a)(7) of this section, and the basis for each determination;

(v) the impact on customers' rates, including the allocation among customer classes, from collecting the total amount recommended by the Commission under item (i) of this paragraph; and

(vi) the impact of using other federal poverty level benchmarks on costs and the effectiveness of the electric universal service program.

(2) (i) To assist the Commission in preparing its recommendations under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Office of Home Energy Programs shall report to the Commission each year on:

1. the number of customers and the amount of distributions made to fuel customers under the Maryland Energy Assistance Program established under Title 5, Subtitle 5A of the Human Services Article, identified by funding source and fuel source;

2. the cost of outreach and education materials provided by the Office of Home Energy Programs for the electric universal service program; and

3. the amount of money that the Department of Human Services receives, and is projected to receive, for low-income energy assistance from:

A. the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund under § 9-20B-05 of the State Government Article;

B. with respect to electric customers only, the Maryland Energy Assistance Program; and

C. any other federal, State, local, or private source.

(ii) The Office of Home Energy Programs may satisfy the reporting requirement of subparagraph (i)1 of this paragraph by providing the Commission with a copy of material that contains the required information and that the Office of Home Energy Programs submits to the federal government.

(iii) The Commission shall include the information provided by the Office of Home Energy Programs under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph in its report to the General Assembly under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(3) Subject to subsection (d)(2) of this section, the Commission shall include the information provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development under subsection (d)(1) of this section in its report to the General Assembly under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(4) The electric universal service program shall be subject to audit by the Office of Legislative Audits in accordance with §§ 2–1220 through 2–1227 of the State Government Article.

(d) (1) On or before [December] **JANUARY** 1 of each year, the Department of Housing and Community Development shall report, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on the low-income residential weatherization component of the electric universal service program, including:

- (i) the amount of funds expended during the preceding fiscal year;
- (ii) the level of participation during the preceding fiscal year, including the number of households served in each area of the State; and
- (iii) the types of projects, including the average cost per unit, provided to households during the preceding fiscal year.

(2) The Department of Housing and Community Development may satisfy the reporting requirement under paragraph (1) of this subsection by requesting the Commission to include the information in the Commission's report required under subsection (c) of this section and providing the information to the Commission by the date specified by the Commission.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2021.

Enacted under Article II, § 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, May 30, 2021.