

BY: Environmental Matters Committee

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 268

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 2, strike “Natural Gas Companies -”; in line 3, after “Program” insert “Task Force”; in line 4, strike “requiring the Public Service Commission to establish” and substitute “establishing a Natural Gas Universal Service Program Task Force to study the possible establishment of”; in the same line, strike “certain”; strike beginning with “requiring” in line 5 down through “recommendation” in line 11 and substitute “providing for the membership, charge, and responsibilities of the Task Force; requiring the Public Service Commission to provide staff support for the Task Force; requiring the Task Force to report to certain persons by a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act”; and in line 11, after “the” insert “study of a possible”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 1, after line 21, insert:

“(A) THERE IS A NATURAL GAS UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM TASK FORCE.

(B) (1) THE TASK FORCE CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(I) ONE MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;

(II) ONE MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;

(III) THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION OR A DESIGNEE OF THE CHAIRMAN;

(Over)

(IV) THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL OR A DESIGNEE OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL;

(V) THE SECRETARY OF HUMAN RESOURCES OR A DESIGNEE OF THE SECRETARY;

(VI) THE DIRECTOR OF THE MARYLAND ENERGY ADMINISTRATION OR A DESIGNEE OF THE DIRECTOR;

(VII) TWO MEMBERS REPRESENTING NATURAL GAS COMPANIES OPERATING IN THE STATE, APPOINTED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION;

(VIII) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL GAS CUSTOMERS IN THE STATE, APPOINTED BY THE MARYLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE;

(IX) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING RESIDENTIAL GAS CUSTOMERS IN THE STATE, APPOINTED BY THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL;

(X) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING LOW-INCOME RESIDENTIAL GAS CUSTOMERS IN THE STATE, APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY OF HUMAN RESOURCES;

(XI) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS IN THE STATE, APPOINTED BY THE MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE;

(XII) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING COUNTIES IN THE STATE, APPOINTED BY THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES; AND

(XIII) TWO MEMBERS REPRESENTING CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN THE STATE, APPOINTED BY THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL.

(2) IN CONSULTATION WITH THE OTHER APPOINTING ENTITIES, THE

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION SHALL COORDINATE THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR THE TASK FORCE IN AN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE DIVERSITY OF GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE STATE ON THE TASK FORCE.

(3) THE TASK FORCE SHALL SELECT A CHAIRMAN FROM AMONG ITS MEMBERS.

(4) A MEMBER OF THE TASK FORCE:

(I) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF THE TASK FORCE; BUT

(II) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES UNDER THE STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.

(C) THE TASK FORCE SHALL:

(1) IDENTIFY POPULATIONS OF LOW-INCOME GAS CUSTOMERS IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE IN MEETING THEIR HEATING NEEDS;

(2) IDENTIFY FORMS OF ASSISTANCE THAT MAY BE APPROPRIATE FOR LOW-INCOME GAS CUSTOMERS, INCLUDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES;

(3) ANALYZE FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL, AND PRIVATE CHARITABLE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN THIS STATE AND OTHER STATES THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME GAS CUSTOMERS AND ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS;

(4) IDENTIFY SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR LOW-INCOME GAS CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING A SURCHARGE ON COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND RESIDENTIAL GAS CUSTOMERS IN THE STATE;

(Over)

(5) DEVELOP MODELS FOR ASSISTANCE OF LOW-INCOME GAS CUSTOMERS; AND

(6) RECOMMEND OPTIONS FOR MEETING THE ENERGY NEEDS OF LOW-INCOME GAS CUSTOMERS, INCLUDING OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND ADMINISTERING A NATURAL GAS UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM.

(D) THE TASK FORCE SHALL MEET AT LEAST FOUR TIMES A YEAR, AT THE TIMES AND PLACES THAT IT DETERMINES.

(E) THE TASK FORCE SHALL CONDUCT PUBLIC MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE STATE IN THE COURSE OF ITS STUDY UNDER THIS SECTION.

(F) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2003, THE TASK FORCE SHALL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION, THE GOVERNOR, AND, SUBJECT TO § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING ANY PROPOSED LEGISLATION NECESSARY OR ADVISABLE TO IMPLEMENT A NATURAL GAS UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM.

(G) THE COMMISSION SHALL PROVIDE STAFF SUPPORT TO THE TASK FORCE.”.

On pages 1 through 5, strike in their entirety the lines beginning with line 22 on page 1 through line 13 on page 5, inclusive.

AMENDMENT NO. 3

On page 5, in line 15, strike “October” and substitute “July”; and in the same line, after “2002.” insert “It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and, at the end of June 30, 2004, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.”.