

HOUSE BILL 766

C5

9lr1578

By: **Delegate Costa**

Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2009

Assigned to: Economic Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Utility Companies – Gas, Electric, and Telephone Companies – Billing**
3 **Practices**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring gas, electric, and telephone companies to bill residential
5 customers once every billing period, subject to certain exceptions; requiring that
6 the due date for a monthly bill issued by a telephone company to a residential
7 customer be at least a certain number of days after the date on which the bill is
8 issued; defining a certain term; and generally relating to gas, electric, and
9 telephone companies.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
11 Article – Public Utility Companies
12 Section 7–305
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2008 Replacement Volume and 2008 Supplement)

15 BY adding to
16 Article – Public Utility Companies
17 Section 8–206
18 Annotated Code of Maryland
19 (2008 Replacement Volume and 2008 Supplement)

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

22 **Article – Public Utility Companies**

23 7–305.

24 (a) **IN THIS SECTION, “BILLING PERIOD” MEANS A PERIOD OF AT LEAST**
25 **26 DAYS BUT NOT MORE THAN 35 DAYS.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **(B)** A gas company or electric company may bill its customers for gas,
2 electricity, or any other service it renders only on the basis of the net total cost of the
3 service under the applicable rate that is filed for that service.

4 **[(b)] (C)** (1) The Commission may authorize a gas company or electric
5 company to apply an additional charge over the net total cost to any bill or part of a
6 bill that is not paid:

7 (i) within 20 days for a residential customer or residential
8 cooperative; or

9 (ii) within 15 days for any other customer.

10 (2) (i) The additional charge that is applied by a gas company or
11 electric company under this subsection may not exceed 5% of the net bill or part of the
12 bill.

13 (ii) Unless the Commission approves the imposition of different
14 charges on different classes of customers, any additional charges applied by a gas
15 company or electric company under this subsection shall be uniform for all customers.

16 **(D) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS**
17 **SUBSECTION, A GAS COMPANY OR ELECTRIC COMPANY SHALL BILL A**
18 **RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER ONCE EVERY BILLING PERIOD.**

19 **(2) PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO:**

20 **(I) AN INITIAL BILL ISSUED TO A NEW CUSTOMER;**

21 **(II) A FINAL BILL ISSUED TO A CUSTOMER FOLLOWING**
22 **TERMINATION OF THE CUSTOMER'S SERVICE;**

23 **(III) A BILL ISSUED TO CORRECT A BILLING ERROR; OR**

24 **(IV) A BILL FOR UNPAID CHARGES.**

25 **8-206.**

26 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, "BILLING PERIOD" MEANS A PERIOD OF AT LEAST**
27 **26 DAYS BUT NOT MORE THAN 35 DAYS.**

28 **(B) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS**
29 **SUBSECTION, A TELEPHONE COMPANY SHALL BILL A RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER**
30 **ONCE EVERY BILLING PERIOD.**

1 **(2) PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO:**

2 **(I) AN INITIAL BILL ISSUED TO A NEW CUSTOMER;**

3 **(II) A FINAL BILL ISSUED TO A CUSTOMER FOLLOWING**
4 **TERMINATION OF THE CUSTOMER'S SERVICE;**

5 **(III) A BILL ISSUED TO CORRECT A BILLING ERROR; OR**

6 **(IV) A BILL FOR UNPAID CHARGES.**

7 **(C) THE DUE DATE FOR PAYMENT OF A MONTHLY BILL ISSUED BY A**
8 **TELEPHONE COMPANY TO A RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER SHALL BE AT LEAST 20**
9 **DAYS AFTER THE DATE ON WHICH THE BILL IS ISSUED.**

10 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
11 October 1, 2009.