

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2009 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 766 (Delegate Costa)  
Economic Matters

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**Public Utility Companies - Gas, Electric, and Telephone Companies - Billing Practices**

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This bill requires a gas, electric, or telephone company to bill a residential customer once every billing period. A billing period is defined as a period of at least 26 days but not more than 35 days. A bill may be sent to a residential electric, gas, or telephone customer more than once a billing period if it is (1) an initial bill issued to a new customer; (2) a final bill issued to a customer who has terminated service; (3) a bill issued to correct a billing error; or (4) a bill for unpaid charges. The due date for a telephone company bill must be at least 20 days after the bill's issuance date.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** State law does not specify the length of a billing period or how often a gas, electric, or telephone company may bill a residential customer. Each electric, gas, and telephone company regulated by the Public Service Commission (PSC) files a tariff, which contains company billing policies.

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 20.45.04.01) requires telephone companies to bill customers at least monthly. Gas, electric, and combination gas and electric utilities

must prepare a Customers' Rights Pamphlet summarizing the rights and responsibilities of their customers, consistent with the utilities' tariff provisions and PSC regulations. This customers' rights pamphlet must contain billing procedures, including the late payment charges. This pamphlet must be mailed to each customer once a year and must be delivered or mailed to each new customer.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Office of People's Counsel, Public Service Commission, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 25, 2009  
mlm/rhh

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