

**SB0765/817878/1**

BY: Finance Committee

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 765  
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 2, strike “Public Utilities – Consumer Relations –” and substitute “Public Service Commission – Study on”; and strike beginning with “authorizing” in line 4 down through “tenant” in line 22 and substitute “requiring the Public Service Commission to convene a workgroup to study and make recommendations on developing a mechanism to allow certain tenants to pay for utilities when a certain landlord defaults; providing for the composition of the workgroup; requiring the workgroup to examine certain issues in conducting a certain study; requiring the Commission to report to certain committees of the General Assembly on or before a certain date; and generally relating to a study on developing a mechanism to allow residential tenants to pay for utilities when a landlord responsible for paying the utilities defaults”.

On pages 1 and 2, strike in their entirety the lines beginning with line 23 on page 1 through line 3 on page 2, inclusive.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On pages 2 through 6, strike in their entirety the lines beginning with line 4 on page 2 through line 8 on page 6, inclusive, and substitute:

“SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That:

(a) The Public Service Commission shall convene a workgroup to study and make recommendations on how to develop a mechanism to allow tenants in residential properties to pay for their utilities when the landlord responsible for utility payments defaults on that responsibility.

(Over)

- (b) The workgroup shall include:
- (1) the Office of People's Counsel;
  - (2) the Public Justice Center;
  - (3) Energy Advocates;
  - (4) the Legal Aid Bureau;
  - (5) representatives from each gas and electric utility company operating in the State;
  - (6) representatives from private and public water utility companies and municipalities;
  - (7) representatives from a landlord association or a property owners association; and
  - (8) other interested stakeholders.
- (c) In conducting the study, the workgroup shall examine:
- (1) how to ensure proper notice is given to an occupant of a residential property when utility termination due to nonpayment is pending;
  - (2) what mechanism would be most effective in allowing a tenant to pay for utility usage when a landlord defaults on the landlord's responsibility to pay;
  - (3) how to protect a utility company's rights to pursue bad debt;

(4) how to protect a tenant's right to pursue breach of contract remedies;

(5) how similar efforts in other states have worked;

(6) how to eliminate the opportunity for fraud in the payment for utility usage by a tenant when a landlord defaults on the landlord's responsibility to pay; and

(7) any other matters the workgroup identifies as pertinent to the respective interests of the tenants, utilities, and landlords.

(d) On or before December 1, 2012, the Public Service Commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article."

On page 6, in line 10, strike "October" and substitute "June".