

Chapter 122

(House Bill 587)

AN ACT concerning

Electric Companies – Service Quality and Reliability Standards – Vegetation Management

FOR the purpose of prohibiting a county or municipal corporation from ~~enacting a local law that prevents an electric company from complying~~ taking certain actions that interfere with, or materially increase costs of, compliance with certain vegetation management standards; ~~defining a certain term;~~ and generally relating to vegetation management.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Public Utilities

Section ~~7-213(a) and (e)~~ 7-213(e)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2010 Replacement Volume and 2012 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Public Utilities

Section ~~7-213(b)~~ 7-213(a), (b), (c), and (d)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2010 Replacement Volume and 2012 Supplement)

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

Article – Public Utilities

7-213.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “System-average interruption duration index” or “SAIDI” means the sum of the customer interruption hours divided by the total number of customers served.

(3) “System-average interruption frequency index” or “SAIFI” means the sum of the number of customer interruptions divided by the total number of customers served.

~~(4) “VEGETATION MANAGEMENT” MEANS THE ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OF RIGHTS OF WAY OR EASEMENTS OWNED BY AN ELECTRIC COMPANY BY PRUNING OR CLEARING VEGETATION NEAR TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION LINES.~~

(b) It is the goal of the State that each electric company provide its customers with high levels of service quality and reliability in a cost-effective manner, as measured by objective and verifiable standards, and that each electric company be held accountable if it fails to deliver reliable service according to those standards.

(c) This section does not apply to small rural electric cooperatives or municipal electric companies.

(d) On or before July 1, 2012, the Commission shall adopt regulations that implement service quality and reliability standards relating to the delivery of electricity to retail customers by electric companies through their distribution systems, using:

(1) SAIFI;

(2) SAIDI; and

(3) any other performance measurement that the Commission determines to be reasonable.

(e) (1) The regulations adopted under subsection (d) of this section shall:

(i) include service quality and reliability standards, including standards relating to:

1. service interruption;
2. downed wire response;
3. customer communications;
4. vegetation management;
5. periodic equipment inspections;
6. annual reliability reporting; and
7. any other standards established by the Commission;

(ii) account for major outages caused by events outside the control of an electric company; and

(iii) for an electric company that fails to meet the applicable service quality and reliability standards, require the company to file a corrective action plan that details specific actions the company will take to meet the standards.

(2) The regulations adopted under subsection (d) of this section may include a separate reliability standard for each electric company in order to account for system reliability differentiating factors, including:

- (i) system design;
- (ii) existing infrastructure;
- (iii) customer density; and
- (iv) geography.

(3) In adopting the regulations required under subsection (d) of this section, the Commission shall:

- (i) consider applicable standards of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers;
- (ii) ensure that the service quality and reliability standards are cost-effective; and
- (iii) with respect to standards relating to vegetation management, consider:
 1. limitations on an electric company's right to access private property; and
 2. customer acceptance of vegetation management initiatives.

(4) A COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION MAY NOT ENACT ADOPT OR ENFORCE A LOCAL LAW FOR THE PLANTING, CARE, AND PROTECTION OF VEGETATION THAT PREVENTS AN ELECTRIC COMPANY FROM COMPLYING WITH, OR MATERIALLY INCREASES THE COST OF THE WORK OF AN ELECTRIC COMPANY TOWARD, COMPLIANCE WITH THE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT STANDARDS ADOPTED UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect ~~July~~ June 1, 2013.

Approved by the Governor, April 9, 2013.