

SENATE BILL 283

O1, C5

2lr1407
CF HB 138

By: Senator Washington

Introduced and read first time: January 19, 2022

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Department of Human Services – Electric Universal Service Program –**
3 **Eligibility**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Human Services to authorize benefits
5 under the electric universal service program for certain electric customers; and
6 generally relating to the electric universal service program.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
8 Article – Public Utilities
9 Section 7-512.1(a)
10 Annotated Code of Maryland
11 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

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

14 **Article – Public Utilities**

15 7-512.1.

16 (a) (1) The Commission shall establish an electric universal service program
17 to assist electric customers with annual incomes:

18 (i) at or below 175% of the federal poverty level; or

19 (ii) for a customer at least 67 years of age, at or below 200% of the
20 federal poverty level.

21 (2) The components of the electric universal service program shall include:

22 (i) bill assistance;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(ii) low-income residential weatherization; and

(iii) the retirement of arrearages for electric customers who have not received assistance in retiring arrearages under the universal service program within the preceding 5 fiscal years.

5 (3) The Department of Housing and Community Development is
6 responsible for administering the low-income residential weatherization component of the
7 electric universal service program.

(4) (i) The Department of Human Services, through the Office of Home Energy Programs, is responsible for administering the bill assistance and the arrearage retirement components of the electric universal service program.

11 (ii) The Department of Human Services may:

(III) THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SHALL
EFITS UNDER THE ELECTRIC UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM FOR
STOMER WHO DOES NOT MEET THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
L LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

24 (6) The Commission has oversight responsibility for the bill assistance and
25 the arrearage retirement components of the electric universal service program and any
26 other funds expended under this section.

32 (8) (i) If an applicant for bill assistance or arrearage retirement is to be
33 denied due to deficient documentation, the Department of Human Services shall:

1. promptly provide notice of the deficiency to the applicant;

1 and

2 2. afford the applicant ample opportunity of not less than 3
3 months to cure the deficiency.

4 (ii) An electric company may not begin the process to terminate
5 service to an applicant while the applicant is curing a deficiency under this paragraph.

6 (9) Notwithstanding paragraph (2)(iii) of this subsection, any assistance
7 received for arrearage retirement by a customer in calendar years 2020 and 2021 may not
8 be counted toward the limitation on the number of times the customer may receive
9 assistance for arrearage retirement.

10 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
11 October 1, 2022.