

CHAPTER 145

AN ACT concerning certain utility service protections and supplementing Title 40A of the New Jersey Statutes and Title 48 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.40A:5A-31 Summer Termination Program, Department of Community Affairs, definitions.

1. a. For the purposes of this section:

“Board” means the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.

“Department” means the Department of Community Affairs.

“Local authority” means an authority, as defined in section 3 of P.L.1983, c.313 (C.40A:5A-3), or a water district established pursuant to R.S.40:62-96, that provides electric, sewer, or water service.

“Municipal utility” means a municipal public utility, as defined in N.J.S.40A:1-1, that provides electric, sewer, or water service.

“Program” means the Summer Termination Program established pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

“Residential customer” means a residential customer of record of a local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric cooperative, as well as any residential tenant of a residence where the owner or any agent or other representative of the owner of the residence is a non-residential customer of record of a local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric cooperative.

“Rural electric cooperative” means a rural electric cooperative, as defined in section 2 of P.L.2017, c.297 (C.48:24-2).

“Utility emergency” means any condition constituting a potential danger to life, health, or property that requires a local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric cooperative to discontinue, interrupt, or maintain the discontinuation or interruption of electric, sewer, or water service or that results in an unscheduled discontinuance or interruption of electric, sewer, or water service.

b. Within 120 days of the effective date of P.L.2025, c.145 (C.40A:5A-31 et al.), the Department of Community Affairs shall establish a Summer Termination Program, which shall prohibit a local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric cooperative from discontinuing electric, sewer, or water service during the period of June 15 through August 31 to a residential customer deemed eligible for the program by the department pursuant to subsection d. of this section. Each year, a residential customer who is eligible for and seeks utility shutoff protections under the program, and whose electric, sewer, or water service has been terminated for nonpayment prior to June 15, shall have their service restored on June 15, and no reconnection fee shall be charged. Prior to restoring service to a residential customer pursuant to this subsection, a local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric cooperative may verify that the residential customer continues to reside in or occupy the place of residence for which service was terminated for nonpayment.

c. During the period of June 15 through August 31, each local authority, municipal utility, and rural electric cooperative shall discuss a deferred payment arrangement with its residential customers who participate in the program and are in arrears.

d. The department shall deem a residential customer eligible for the program if the residential customer:

(1) meets one or more of the categorical eligibility criteria for the department’s Winter Termination Program, pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the department and published in the New Jersey Administrative Code; or

(2) is unable to pay the residential customer's local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric cooperative bill due to certain circumstances beyond the residential customer's control, including, but not limited to: unemployment, illness, medically related expenses, the recent death of an immediate family member, and any other circumstances, as determined by the department, that might cause financial hardship.

e. The department shall establish a process, in a form and manner to be determined by the department, through which a residential customer may self-certify an inability to pay the residential customer's local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric cooperative bill due to certain circumstances beyond the residential customer's control, including, but not limited to: unemployment, illness, medically-related expenses, recent death of an immediate family member, and any other circumstances, as determined by the department, that might cause financial hardship.

f. This section shall not apply to shutoffs, due to a utility emergency, of electric, sewer, or water service to a residential customer who is eligible for utility shutoff protections under the program.

C.40A:5A-32 Rules, regulations.

2. The Department of Community Affairs, in consultation with the Board of Public Utilities, shall promulgate rules and regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to effectuate the purposes of section 1 of P.L.2025, c.145 (C.40A:5A-31).

C.48:2-29.56b Summer Termination Program, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, definitions.

3. a. For the purposes of this section:

"Board" means the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.

"Program" means the Summer Termination Program established pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

"Public utility" means a public utility, as that term is defined in R.S.48:2-13, that provides electric, sewer, or water service.

"Residential customer" means a residential customer of record of a public utility, as well as any residential tenant of a residence where the owner or any agent or other representative of the owner of the residence is a non-residential customer of record of a public utility.

"Utility emergency" means any condition constituting a potential danger to life, health, or property that requires a public utility to discontinue, interrupt, or maintain the discontinuation or interruption of electric, sewer, or water service or that results in an unscheduled discontinuance or interruption of electric, sewer, or water service.

b. Within 120 days of the effective date of P.L.2025, c.145 (C.40A:5A-31 et al.), the Board of Public Utilities shall establish a Summer Termination Program, which shall prohibit a public utility from discontinuing electric, sewer, or water service during the period of June 15 through August 31 to a residential customer deemed eligible for the program by the board pursuant to subsection d. of this section. Each year, a residential customer who is eligible for and seeks utility shutoff protections under the program, and whose electric, sewer, or water service has been terminated for nonpayment prior to June 15, shall have their service restored on June 15, and no reconnection fee shall be charged. Prior to restoring service pursuant to this subsection, a public utility may verify that the residential customer continues to reside in or occupy the place of residence for which service was terminated for nonpayment.

c. During the period of June 15 through August 31, each public utility shall discuss a deferred payment arrangement with its residential customers who participate in the program and are in arrears.

d. The board shall deem a residential customer eligible for the program if the residential customer:

(1) meets one or more of the categorical eligibility criteria for the board's Winter Termination Program, established by the board pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the board and published in the New Jersey Administrative Code; or

(2) is unable to pay the residential customer's public utility bill due to certain circumstances beyond the residential customer's control, including, but not limited to: unemployment, illness, medically related expenses, the recent death of an immediate family member, and any other circumstances, as determined by the board, that might cause financial hardship.

e. The board shall establish a process, in a form and manner to be determined by the board, through which a residential customer may self-certify an inability to pay the residential customer's public utility bill due to certain circumstances beyond the residential customer's control, including, but not limited to: unemployment, illness, medically-related expenses, the recent death of an immediate family member, and any other circumstances, as determined by the board, that might cause financial hardship.

f. This section shall not apply to shutoffs, due to a utility emergency, of electric, sewer, or water service to a residential customer who is eligible for utility shutoff protections under the program.

4. The Board of Public Utilities shall promulgate rules and regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to effectuate the purpose of section 3 of P.L.2025, c.145 (C.48:2-29.56b).

5. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved September 24, 2025.