

SENATE, No. 712

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator DAWN MARIE ADDIEGO

District 8 (Atlantic, Burlington and Camden)

SYNOPSIS

Requires public utilities to provide priority service to public schools, private schools, and public safety agencies.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** requiring public utilities to provide priority service to
2 public schools, private schools, and public safety agencies, and
3 supplementing Title 48 of the Revised Statutes.

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

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8 1. a. A public utility shall maintain a unique customer service
9 telephone number for a public school, private school, and public
10 safety agency to contact the public utility, as determined by the
11 board.

12 b. A public utility shall maintain a personnel department
13 consisting of technicians, customer service representatives,
14 managerial employees, and other employees devoted to giving
15 priority service to a public school, private school, and public safety
16 agency, as determined by the board.

17 c. As used in this section:

18 “Board” means the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities or any
19 successor agency.

20 “Public safety agency” means a functional division of the State,
21 or any political subdivision thereof, which dispatches or provides
22 law enforcement, fire fighting, emergency medical services, or
23 other emergency services.

24 “Public school” and “private school” shall have the same
25 meaning as provided in N.J.S.18A:1-1.

26 “Public utility” shall have the same meaning as provided in
27 R.S.48:2-13.

28

29 2. a. A local exchange telecommunications company shall not
30 discontinue service to a public school, private school, or public
31 safety agency that is in the process of changing local exchange
32 telecommunications companies until the new local exchange
33 telecommunications company certifies that the change has occurred
34 and the service is operational, as determined by the board.

35 b. As used in this section:

36 “Board” means the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities or any
37 successor agency.

38 “Local exchange telecommunications company” shall have the
39 same meaning as provided in section 2 of P.L.1991, c.428 (C.48:2-
40 21.17).

41 “Public safety agency” means a functional division of the State,
42 or any political subdivision thereof, which dispatches or provides
43 law enforcement, fire fighting, emergency medical services, or
44 other emergency services.

45 “Public school” and “private school” shall have the same
46 meaning as provided for in N.J.S.18A:1-1.

1 3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the seventh
2 month next following the date of enactment.

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STATEMENT

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7 The bill requires a public utility to maintain a unique customer
8 service telephone number for public schools, private schools, and
9 public safety agencies to contact the public utility, as determined by
10 the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (board). Further, a public
11 utility is to maintain a personnel department consisting of
12 technicians, customer service representatives, managerial
13 employees, and other employees devoted to giving priority service
14 to public schools, private schools, and public safety agencies, as
15 determined by board. The term "public utility" includes companies
16 that are regulated by the board which provide electric, gas, and
17 water and sewer service. A "public safety agency" is defined to
18 mean a functional division of the State, or any political subdivision
19 thereof, which dispatches or provides law enforcement, fire
20 fighting, emergency medical services, or other emergency services.

21 The bill provides that a local exchange telecommunications
22 company is prohibited from discontinuing service to a public
23 school, private school, or public safety agency that is in the process
24 of changing local exchange telecommunications companies until the
25 new local exchange telecommunications company certifies that the
26 change has occurred and the service is operational, as determined
27 by the board. Under the bill, "local exchange telecommunications
28 company" is defined to mean a telecommunications carrier
29 regulated by the board and authorized by the board to provide local
30 telecommunications services.