

[Second Reprint]

**SENATE, No. 4081**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 15, 2021

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator NILSA I. CRUZ-PEREZ**

**District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER**

**District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)**

**Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO**

**District 20 (Union)**

**Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON**

**District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

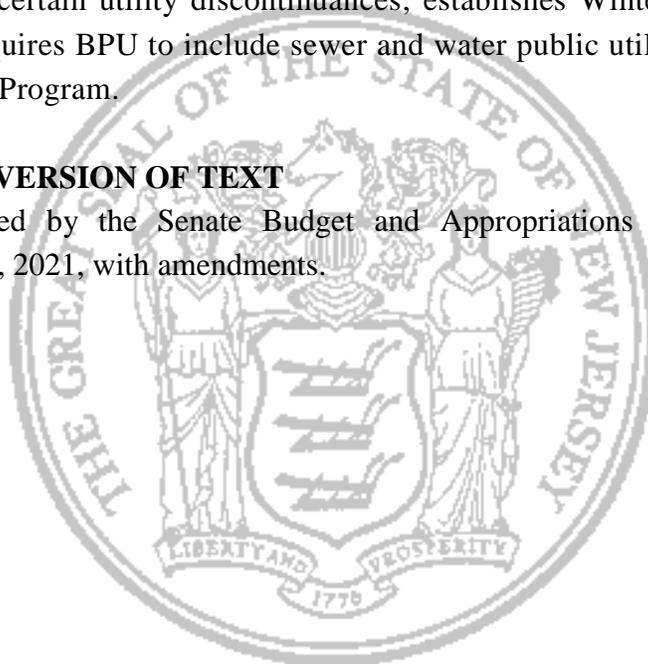
**Senator Greenstein and Assemblywoman Lopez**

**SYNOPSIS**

Prohibits certain utility discontinuances; establishes Winter Termination Program; requires BPU to include sewer and water public utilities in Winter Termination Program.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on December 16, 2021, with amendments.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/20/2021)**

1 AN ACT concerning certain <sup>2</sup>[sewer and water]<sup>2</sup> utility service  
 2 protections and supplementing Title 40A of the New Jersey  
 3 Statutes and Title 48 of the Revised Statutes.

4  
 5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
 6 of New Jersey:

7  
 8 <sup>2</sup>1. As used in sections 1 through 2 of P.L. , c. (C. )  
 9 (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

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

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

16 “Public utility” means a public utility, as defined pursuant to  
 17 R.S.48:2-13, that provides electric, gas, sewer, or water service.

18 “Residential customer” means a residential customer of record of  
 19 a local authority, municipal utility, or a public utility or any  
 20 residential tenant of a residence where the owner or any agent or  
 21 other representative of the owner of the residence is a non-  
 22 residential customer of record of a local authority, municipal utility,  
 23 or public utility.<sup>2</sup>

24  
 25 <sup>2</sup>[1.] <sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup>a.<sup>1</sup> The provisions of Executive Order No. 246 of  
 26 2021 concerning a grace period for residential customers of certain  
 27 utilities, including paragraphs two through four, nine through 14, 16  
 28 through 18, and 21, shall remain in effect for any local authority,  
 29 municipal utility, and public utility that provides sewer or water  
 30 service <sup>2</sup>, and any municipal utility or rural electric cooperative that  
 31 provides electric service,<sup>2</sup> through March 15, 2022. Any residential  
 32 customer sewer or water service discontinuance <sup>2</sup>, and any  
 33 discontinuance of electric service to a residential customer of a  
 34 municipal utility or rural electric cooperative<sup>2</sup> occurring between  
 35 the end of the grace period established pursuant to Executive Order  
 36 No. 246 of 2021 and the effective date of P.L. , c. (C. )  
 37 (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall be nullified and  
 38 service shall be restored immediately. Notwithstanding any other  
 39 provisions of law, a local authority or municipal utility shall not  
 40 place, sell, or enforce a lien on real property for the unpaid balance  
 41 of any <sup>2</sup>electric or<sup>2</sup> water <sup>2</sup>charges,<sup>2</sup> or <sup>2</sup>for the unpaid balance of  
 42 any<sup>2</sup> sewer charges <sup>2</sup>not sold at tax sale as of January 1, 2022<sup>2</sup> until  
 43 after the expiration of the extended grace period pursuant to this  
 44 section. The extended grace period provided for in this section shall  
 45 expire on March 15, 2022.

**EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

**Matter underlined thus is new matter.**

**Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:**

<sup>1</sup>Senate SEG committee amendments adopted December 9, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Senate SBA committee amendments adopted December 16, 2021.

1 <sup>1</sup>b. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, prior to  
2 discontinuing service to a residential customer, or placing, selling,  
3 or enforcing a lien on real property owned by a residential customer  
4 <sup>2</sup>[.]<sup>2</sup> for the unpaid balance of any <sup>2</sup>[electric, gas, or]<sup>2</sup> water  
5 charges accrued between the declaration of a public health  
6 emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and <sup>2</sup>[the expiration  
7 date of the extended grace period established in subsection a. of this  
8 section] March 15, 2022<sup>2</sup>, a local authority, municipal utility, or  
9 public utility shall offer <sup>2</sup>[to] the<sup>2</sup> residential <sup>2</sup>[customers]  
10 customer a<sup>2</sup> utility service bill payment <sup>2</sup>[plans] plan<sup>2</sup> for the  
11 unpaid balance of any water <sup>2</sup>[or electric]<sup>2</sup> charges accrued  
12 <sup>2</sup>[between the declaration of a public health emergency in  
13 Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and the expiration date of the  
14 extended grace period established in subsection a. of this section]  
15 prior to March 15, 2022<sup>2</sup>. The utility service bill payment plan  
16 shall have a minimum 12 <sup>2</sup>[-]<sup>2</sup> month duration unless the  
17 residential customer requests a shorter payback period, and shall not  
18 require payment of a down payment, deposit, reconnection costs,  
19 interest, or penalties. The local authority, municipal utility, or  
20 public utility may offer residential customers a combined payment  
21 and payment forgiveness plan with a duration of less than 12  
22 months that involves forgiveness of at least 50 percent of the  
23 outstanding principal upon the consent of the residential customer.  
24 If a residential customer does not agree to a utility service bill  
25 payment plan <sup>2</sup>pursuant to this subsection<sup>2</sup> within 30 days of being  
26 offered <sup>2</sup>[a] the<sup>2</sup> plan by the local authority, municipal utility, or  
27 public utility, <sup>2</sup>[the residential customer shall be deemed to have  
28 waived the right to enter into a utility service bill payment plan  
29 and]<sup>2</sup> the local authority, municipal utility, or public utility may  
30 take appropriate enforcement action after <sup>2</sup>[the expiration date of  
31 the extended grace period pursuant to this section] March 15, 2022,  
32 including discontinuing service or placing, selling, or enforcing a  
33 lien, to the extent otherwise permitted by law <sup>2</sup>.

34 c. <sup>2</sup>Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, prior to  
35 discontinuing service to a residential customer, or placing, selling,  
36 or enforcing a lien on real property owned by a residential  
37 customer, for the unpaid balance of any electric charges accrued  
38 between the declaration of a public health emergency in Executive  
39 Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15, 2022, a municipal electric  
40 utility or rural electric cooperative shall offer the residential  
41 customer a utility service bill payment plan for the unpaid balance  
42 of any electric charges accrued prior to March 15, 2022. The utility  
43 service bill payment plan shall have a minimum 12 month duration  
44 unless the residential customer requests a shorter payback period,  
45 and shall not require payment of a down payment, deposit,  
46 reconnection costs, interest, or penalties. The municipal electric  
47 utility or rural electric cooperative may offer residential customers a

1 combined payment and payment forgiveness plan with a duration of  
2 less than 12 months that involves forgiveness of at least 50 percent  
3 of the outstanding principal upon the consent of the residential  
4 customer. If a residential customer does not agree to a utility  
5 service bill payment plan pursuant to this subsection within 30 days  
6 of being offered the plan by the municipal electric utility or rural  
7 electric cooperative, the municipal electric utility or rural electric  
8 cooperative may take appropriate enforcement action after March  
9 15, 2022, including discontinuing service or placing, selling, or  
10 enforcing a lien, to the extent otherwise permitted by law.

11 d. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, prior to  
12 discontinuing service to a residential customer for the unpaid  
13 balance of any electric or gas charges accrued between the  
14 declaration of a public health emergency in Executive Order No.  
15 103 of 2020 and the expiration date of Executive Order No. 246 of  
16 2021, or in the case of a customer participating in the Winter  
17 Termination Program set forth in N.J.A.C.14:3-3A.5, any electric or  
18 gas charges accrued between the declaration of a public health  
19 emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15,  
20 2022, a public utility shall offer the residential customer a utility  
21 service bill payment plan for the unpaid balance of any electric or  
22 gas charges accrued prior to the expiration date of Executive Order  
23 No. 246 of 2021 or, in the case of a customer participating in the  
24 Winter Termination Program set forth in N.J.A.C.14:3-3A.5, any  
25 electric or gas charges accrued prior to March 15, 2022. The utility  
26 service bill payment plan shall have a minimum 12 month duration  
27 unless the residential customer requests a shorter payback period,  
28 and shall not require payment of a down payment, deposit,  
29 reconnection costs, interest, or penalties. The public utility may  
30 offer residential customers a combined payment and payment  
31 forgiveness plan with a duration of less than 12 months that  
32 involves forgiveness of at least 50 percent of the outstanding  
33 principal upon the consent of the residential customer. If a  
34 residential customer does not agree to a utility service bill payment  
35 plan pursuant to this subsection within 30 days of being offered the  
36 plan by the public utility, the public utility may take appropriate  
37 enforcement action after the expiration of Executive Order 246 of  
38 2021 or for customers participating in the Winter Termination  
39 Program set forth in N.J.A.C.14:3-3A.5 after March 15, 2022,  
40 including discontinuing service, to the extent otherwise permitted  
41 by law.

42 e.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, prior to  
43 discontinuing service to a residential customer, or placing, selling,  
44 or enforcing a lien on real property owned by a residential  
45 customer, for the unpaid balance of any sewer charges accrued  
46 between <sup>2</sup>the declaration of a public health emergency in Executive  
47 Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15, 2022 that had not been sold  
48 at tax sale as of <sup>2</sup>January 1, 2022 <sup>2</sup>and the expiration date of the

1 extended grace period established in subsection a. of this section]<sup>2</sup> ,  
2 a local authority, municipal utility, or public utility shall offer<sup>2</sup>[to]  
3 a<sup>2</sup> residential<sup>2</sup>[customers] customer a<sup>2</sup> utility service bill payment  
4 [plans] plan<sup>2</sup> for the unpaid balance of any sewer charges accrued  
5 between<sup>2</sup>[January 1, 2022 and the expiration date of the extended  
6 grace period established in subsection a. of this Section. Any  
7 unpaid sewer charges accrued between the declaration of a public  
8 health emergency in Executive Order 103 No. of 2020 and  
9 December 31, 2021 that had not been sold at tax sale as of January  
10 1, 2022 shall also be included in a utility service bill payment plan  
11 pursuant to this subsection] the declaration of a public health  
12 emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15,  
13 2022<sup>2</sup>. The utility service bill payment plan shall have a minimum  
14 12<sup>2</sup>[.]<sup>2</sup> month duration unless the residential customer requests a  
15 shorter payback period, and shall not require a down payment,  
16 deposit, reconnection costs, interest, or penalties. The local  
17 authority, municipal utility, or public utility may offer residential  
18 customers a combined payment and payment forgiveness plan with  
19 a duration of less than 12 months that involves forgiveness of at  
20 least 50 percent of the outstanding principal upon the consent of the  
21 residential customer. If a residential<sup>2</sup>sewer<sup>2</sup> customer does not  
22 agree to a utility service bill payment plan within 30 days of being  
23 offered a plan by the local authority, municipal utility,<sup>2</sup>[the  
24 residential customer shall be deemed to have waived the right to  
25 enter into a utility service bill payment plan and]<sup>2</sup> or public utility,<sup>2</sup>  
26 the local authority, municipal utility, or public utility may take  
27 appropriate enforcement action after<sup>2</sup>[the expiration date of the  
28 extended grace period pursuant to this section] March 15, 2022, to  
29 the extent otherwise permitted by law<sup>2</sup>.

30 <sup>2</sup>[d.] f.<sup>2</sup> Utility service bill payment plans offered by municipal  
31 utilities and local authorities pursuant to subsections b.<sup>2</sup>[and]<sup>2</sup> c.  
32 , and e.<sup>2</sup> of this section shall be subject to the provisions of  
33 R.S.54:5-19 pertaining to installment agreements, except as  
34 otherwise provided in this section, and that a residential customer  
35 shall be offered a utility service bill payment plan for the payment  
36 of water, sewer, or electric charges that became delinquent  
37 notwithstanding whether a parcel of property is already subject to  
38 an installment payment plan pursuant to law.

39 <sup>2</sup>[e.] g.<sup>2</sup> No local authority, municipal utility, or public utility  
40 shall collect any interest, fee, or charge<sup>2</sup>from residential  
41 customers<sup>2</sup> for late or otherwise untimely payments of<sup>2</sup>[electric,  
42 gas, or]<sup>2</sup> water charges that accrued between the declaration of a  
43 public health emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and  
44 [the expiration date of the extended grace period] March 15,  
45 2022<sup>2</sup>. A local authority, municipality utility, or public utility may  
46 charge and collect fees, interest, and penalties for delinquent water

1 <sup>2</sup>[, electric, or gas]<sup>2</sup> charges that accrued prior to the declaration of  
2 a public health emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and  
3 after <sup>2</sup>[the expiration date of the extended grace period established  
4 in subsection a.] March 15, 2022<sup>2</sup> , as permitted by law.

5 <sup>2</sup>h. No municipal electric utility or rural electric cooperative  
6 shall collect any interest, fee, or charge from residential customers  
7 for late or otherwise untimely payments of electric charges that  
8 accrued between the declaration of a public health emergency in  
9 Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and March 15, 2022. A local  
10 authority, municipal utility, or public utility may charge and collect  
11 fees, interest, and penalties for delinquent electric charges that  
12 accrued prior to the declaration of a public health emergency in  
13 Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and after March 15, 2022, as  
14 permitted by law.

15 i. No public utility shall collect any interest, fee, or charge from  
16 residential customers for late or otherwise untimely payments of  
17 electric or gas charges that accrued between the declaration of a  
18 public health emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and  
19 the expiration date of Executive Order No. 246 of 2021, or in the  
20 case of a customer participating in the Winter Termination Program  
21 set forth in N.J.A.C.14:3-3A.5, that accrued between the declaration  
22 of a public health emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020  
23 and March 15, 2022. A public utility may charge and collect fees,  
24 interest, and penalties for delinquent electric or gas charges that  
25 accrued prior to the declaration of a public health emergency in  
26 Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and after the expiration date of  
27 Executive Order No. 246 of 2021 or March 15, 2022, as applicable,  
28 as permitted by law.<sup>2</sup>

29 <sup>2</sup>[f.] j.<sup>2</sup> No local authority, municipal utility, or public utility  
30 shall collect any interest, fee, or charge for late or otherwise  
31 untimely payments of sewer charges that accrued between January  
32 1, 2022 and <sup>2</sup>[the expiration date of the extended grace period]  
33 March 15, 2022<sup>2</sup>, or that accrued between the declaration of a  
34 public health emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and  
35 December 31, 2021 and had not been sold at tax sale as of January  
36 1, 2022. A local authority, municipality utility, or public utility  
37 may charge and collect fees, interest<sup>2</sup>[,]<sup>2</sup> and penalties for  
38 delinquent sewer charges that accrued prior to the declaration of a  
39 public health emergency in Executive Order No. 103 of 2020 and  
40 after <sup>2</sup>[the expiration date of the extended grace period established  
41 in subsection a. of this section] March 15, 2022<sup>2</sup>, as permitted by  
42 law.<sup>1</sup>

43  
44 <sup>2</sup>[2] <sup>3</sup>. As used in sections <sup>2</sup>[2] <sup>3</sup><sup>2</sup> through <sup>2</sup>[4] <sup>5</sup><sup>2</sup> of  
45 P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

46 “Board” means <sup>2</sup>the<sup>2</sup> Board of Public Utilities or any successor  
47 agency.

1 “Department” means the Department of Community Affairs.

2 “Local authority” means an authority, as defined in section 3 of  
3 P.L.1983, c.313 (C.40A:5A-3), <sup>2</sup>or a water district established  
4 pursuant to R.S.40:62-96 et seq.<sup>2</sup> that provides <sup>2</sup>electric,<sup>2</sup> sewer or  
5 water service.

6 “Municipal utility” means a municipal public utility, as defined  
7 in N.J.S.40A:1-1, that provides <sup>2</sup>electric,<sup>2</sup> sewer or water service.

8 “Program” means the Winter <sup>2</sup>**[Sewer and Water]**<sup>2</sup> Termination  
9 Program established pursuant to section <sup>1</sup>**[2]** <sup>2</sup>**[3<sup>1</sup>]** <sup>4</sup>**4**<sup>2</sup> of  
10 P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

11 “Residential customer” means a residential <sup>2</sup>customer of record  
12 of a<sup>2</sup> local authority <sup>2</sup>**[or]** <sup>2</sup> municipal utility <sup>2</sup>**[customer of**  
13 **record]** <sup>2</sup>, or rural electric cooperative,<sup>2</sup> or any residential tenant of a  
14 residence where the owner or any agent or other representative of  
15 the owner of the residence is a non-residential customer of record  
16 <sup>2</sup>of the local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric  
17 cooperative<sup>2</sup>.

18 “Utility emergency” means any condition constituting a potential  
19 danger to life, health, or property requiring a local authority or a  
20 municipal utility to <sup>1</sup>**[immediately]**<sup>1</sup> discontinue <sup>1</sup>**[or]** <sup>1</sup> interrupt  
21 <sup>1</sup>, or maintain the discontinuation or interruption of<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>electric,<sup>2</sup>  
22 sewer or water service or that results in an unscheduled  
23 discontinuance or interruption in <sup>2</sup>electric,<sup>2</sup> sewer or water service.

24  
25 <sup>2</sup>**[3]** <sup>4</sup>**4**<sup>2</sup>. a. Within <sup>1</sup>**[60]** <sup>120</sup><sup>1</sup> days of the effective date of  
26 P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),  
27 the Department of Community Affairs shall establish a Winter  
28 <sup>2</sup>**[Sewer and Water]**<sup>2</sup> Termination Program, which shall prohibit a  
29 local authority <sup>2</sup>**[or]** <sup>2</sup> municipal utility <sup>2</sup>, or rural electric  
30 cooperative<sup>2</sup> from discontinuing service during the period from  
31 November 15 through March 15, to a residential customer deemed  
32 qualified for program eligibility by the department. The program  
33 shall reflect the provisions of the Winter Termination Program for  
34 residential electric and gas public utility service, established by the  
35 board and published in the New Jersey Administrative Code, as  
36 appropriate for <sup>2</sup>residential electric,<sup>2</sup> sewer and water service. The  
37 program shall include:

38 b. <sup>2</sup>**[in]** <sup>1n</sup><sup>2</sup> addition to categorical eligibility for customers  
39 receiving assistance under programs specified in the eligibility  
40 criteria in the board’s Winter Termination Program for residential  
41 electric and gas service:

42 (1) categorical eligibility for any customer receiving assistance  
43 under the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program  
44 established pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act of  
45 2021, Pub.L. 116-260, or any other State or local program that

1 provides assistance specifically to help eligible customers pay  
2 electric, sewer or water bills;

3 (2) a process, in a form and manner to be determined by the  
4 department, which allows a residential customer to self-certify an  
5 inability to pay their local authority or municipal utility bill due to  
6 circumstances beyond the customer's control, provided that the  
7 circumstances shall include, but not be limited to, unemployment,  
8 illness, medically related expenses, recent death of an immediate  
9 family member, and any other circumstances that might cause  
10 financial hardship; and

11 (3) a requirement that a local authority or municipal utility shall  
12 maintain or reconnect electric, sewer, or water service if a  
13 residential customer of a local authority, municipal utility, or rural  
14 electric cooperative can ["demonstrate, in a manner determined by  
15 the department, that the customer has met the requirements  
16 provided in paragraph (1) of this subsection or] prove that they  
17 have submitted an application for assistance under the Low Income  
18 Household Water Assistance Program established pursuant to the  
19 Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Pub.L. 116–260 or any  
20 other State, local, or utility program that provides assistance or  
21 discounted rates specifically to help eligible customers pay  
22 electric, sewer or water bills , before such application has been  
23 approved, denied, or withdrawn , unless there is a utility  
24 emergency. Upon request, the residential customer shall provide  
25 the local authority, municipal utility, or rural electric cooperative  
26 with an update on the status of the application.

27

28 [4] 5. The department, in consultation with the Board of  
29 Public Utilities, shall promulgate rules and regulations, pursuant to  
30 the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-  
31 1 et seq.), to effectuate the purpose of sections [2] 3 and [3] 4  
32 of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)

33

34 [5] 6. As used in sections [5] 6 through [7] 8 of P.L. ,  
35 c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

36 "Board" means the Board of Public Utilities or any successor  
37 agency.

38 "Public utility" means a public utility, as defined pursuant to  
39 R.S.48:2-13, that provides electric, gas, sewer, or water service.

40 "Residential customer" means a residential customer of record  
41 of a public utility ["customer of record"] or any residential tenant  
42 of a residence where the owner or any agent or other representative  
43 of the owner of the residence is a non-residential customer of record  
44 of the public utility.

45 "Utility emergency" means any condition constituting a potential  
46 danger to life, health, or property requiring a sewer or water public  
47 utility to ["immediately"] discontinue ["or"] , interrupt , or

1 maintain the discontinuation or interruption of<sup>1</sup> sewer or water  
 2 service or that results in an unscheduled discontinuance or  
 3 interruption in sewer or water service.

4  
 5 <sup>2</sup>~~6.~~ 7.<sup>2</sup> Within <sup>1</sup>~~60~~ 120<sup>1</sup> days of the effective date of  
 6 P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),  
 7 the Board of Public Utilities shall include each sewer and water  
 8 public utility in the board's Winter Termination Program as  
 9 established by the board pursuant to rules and regulations adopted  
 10 by the board and published in the New Jersey Administrative Code.  
 11 In addition to the inclusion of sewer and water public utilities, the  
 12 board shall establish within the Winter Termination Program:

13 a. categorical eligibility for any customer receiving assistance  
 14 under the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program  
 15 established pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act of  
 16 2021, Pub.L. 116–260 or any other State, local, or utility program  
 17 that provides assistance specifically to help eligible customers pay  
 18 sewer or water bills;

19 b. a process, in a form and manner to be determined by the  
 20 board, which allows a residential customer to self-certify an  
 21 inability to pay their public utility bill due to circumstances beyond  
 22 the customer's control, provided that the circumstances shall  
 23 include, but not be limited to, unemployment, illness, medically  
 24 related expenses, recent death of an immediate family member, and  
 25 any other circumstances that might cause financial hardship; and

26 c. a requirement that a water public utility shall maintain or  
 27 reconnect <sup>1</sup>~~without charge~~<sup>1</sup> water public utility service if <sup>2</sup>~~a~~ the  
 28 water public utility<sup>2</sup> residential customer can <sup>2</sup>~~demonstrate~~, in a  
 29 manner determined by the board, that the customer has met the  
 30 requirements provided in subsection a. of this section or the ~~prove~~  
 31 they have submitted an application for assistance under the<sup>2</sup> Low  
 32 Income Household Water Assistance Program established pursuant  
 33 to the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Pub.L. 116–260 or  
 34 any other State, local, or utility program that provides assistance or  
 35 discounted rates specifically to help eligible customers pay sewer or  
 36 water bills <sup>2</sup>, before such application has been approved, denied, or  
 37 withdrawn<sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup>, unless there is a utility emergency<sup>1</sup>. <sup>2</sup>Upon request,  
 38 the residential customer shall provide the public utility with an  
 39 update on the status of the application.<sup>2</sup>

40  
 41 <sup>2</sup>~~7~~ 8<sup>2</sup>. The board shall promulgate rules and regulations,  
 42 pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410  
 43 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to effectuate the purpose of sections <sup>2</sup>~~5~~ 6<sup>2</sup>  
 44 and <sup>2</sup>~~6~~ 7<sup>2</sup> of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature  
 45 as this bill).

46  
 47 <sup>2</sup>~~8.~~ 9.<sup>2</sup> This act shall take effect immediately.