

As Introduced

**134th General Assembly
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S. B. No. 96

Senator Williams

Cosponsors: Senators Yuko, Craig, Thomas, Antonio, Maharath, Sykes, Fedor

A BILL

To prevent the disruption of utility service during 1
the state of emergency declared regarding COVID- 2
19 and to declare an emergency. 3

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. (A) As used in this section: 4

"Cooperative" means an "electric cooperative" as defined 5
in section 4928.01 of the Revised Code or a company that is 6
owned by, and operated exclusively for, its customers to supply 7
those customers with natural gas for lighting, power, or heating 8
purposes. 9

"Landlord" and "tenant" have the same meanings as in 10
section 5321.01 of the Revised Code. 11

"Manufactured home park lot" means a lot in a 12
"manufactured home park" as that term is defined in section 13
4781.01 of the Revised Code. 14

"Owner," "park operator," and "tenant" have the same 15
meanings as in section 4781.01 of the Revised Code. 16

"Propane supply company" means a company that supplies 17

customers with propane for lighting, power, or heating purposes. 18

"Public utility" means a telephone company, electric light 19
company, natural gas company, pipe-line company, water-works 20
company, heating or cooling company, or sewage disposal system 21
company as defined under section 4905.03 of the Revised Code 22
that is a public utility under section 4905.02 of the Revised 23
Code. 24

"Residential premises" has the same meaning as in section 25
5321.01 of the Revised Code, except that the term does not 26
include a dwelling unit owned or operated by a college or 27
university. 28

"Submetering company" means any person that charges an 29
amount for electric, natural gas, water-works, or sewage 30
services to a residential consumer as measured through one or 31
more submeters and the total amount charged for all components 32
of the service is greater, on a monthly basis than the total 33
amount at which the service was purchased from a public utility 34
or unregulated utility. 35

"Unregulated utility" means a telephone company, electric 36
light company, natural gas company, pipe-line company, water- 37
works company, heating or cooling company, or sewage disposal 38
system company as defined under section 4905.03 of the Revised 39
Code that is excepted from being included as a public utility 40
under section 4905.02 of the Revised Code or that is not subject 41
to regulation by the public utilities commission. "Unregulated 42
utility" does not include a cooperative or submetering company. 43

"Utility service" means the service provided by a 44
cooperative, propane supply company, public utility, submetering 45
company, or unregulated utility. 46

"State of emergency" means the period of the emergency
declared under Executive Order 2020-01D, issued on March 9,
2020.

(B) (1) Except as provided in division (B) (3) of this
section, a cooperative, propane supply company, public utility,
submetering company, or unregulated utility shall not do either
of the following until six months after the state of emergency
terminates:

(a) Curtail, disrupt, or disconnect utility service;

(b) Take any action that would effectively lead to or
cause curtailment, disruption, or disconnection of utility
service.

(2) Neither of the following shall take the actions
described in division (B) (1) (a) or (b) of this section until six
months after the state of emergency terminates:

(a) A landlord with respect to the residential premises of
a tenant;

(b) A park operator with respect to a manufactured home
park lot occupied by a park tenant or owner.

(3) A cooperative, propane supply company, public utility,
submetering company, or unregulated utility may take the actions
described in division (B) (1) (a) or (b) of this section to
prevent or resolve a presently or imminently hazardous situation
or on the request of the customer.

Section 2. This act is an emergency measure necessary for
the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and
safety. The reason for such necessity is to prevent utility
service curtailment, disruption, or disconnection due to unpaid

utility service bills, which bills are unpaid because of 75
unemployment or underemployment caused by the restrictions and 76
other precautions imposed as part of the state of emergency 77
regarding COVID-19. Therefore, this act shall go into immediate 78
effect. 79