

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 120260)

RESOLUTION

Urging the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission to take action to postpone the termination of electric and natural gas utility service for customers who have pending applications for cash assistance under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania law requires that Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) cash assistance applications be processed within 30 days. 55 Pa. Code § 275.3(b)(3); and

WHEREAS, As of March 16, 2012, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) is experiencing a backlog of over 57,000 LIHEAP applications which have been pending for longer than 30 days. Over 34,500 of the backlogged applicants are Philadelphians; and

WHEREAS, LIHEAP cash assistance is critical in helping thousands of low-income Philadelphians pay their utility bills and avoid termination of service; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's (PUC) winter moratorium, which prevents utilities from terminating service to low-income households for non-payment during the winter months, expires on April 1, 2012; and

WHEREAS, Upon the expiration of the winter moratorium, utilities may terminate service to low-income customers who are behind on their utility bills; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of low-income Philadelphians are awaiting a decision for their LIHEAP applications, many of whom have delinquent utility bills because they are unable to afford the monthly payments without LIHEAP assistance; and

WHEREAS, It is unlikely that DPW will be able to process all of the LIHEAP applications before the expiration of the winter moratorium on April 1, 2012; and

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WHEREAS, The expiration of the moratorium could result in the termination of utility service to thousands of customers in Philadelphia who have pending LIHEAP applications and who could otherwise afford their monthly payments with LIHEAP assistance; and

WHEREAS, The termination of life-essential utility service to thousands of Philadelphia households upon the expiration of the winter moratorium on April 1, 2012 will have serious health and safety implications for the families involved; now therefore,

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the City Council of the City of Philadelphia hereby urges the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission to take action to postpone the termination of electric and natural gas utility service for customers who have pending applications for cash assistance under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission as evidence of the grave concern of this legislative body.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-ninth of March, 2012.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Johnson and Tasco

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Johnson, Tasco, Greenlee, Kenney, O'Brien, Reynolds Brown, Henon, Oh, Blackwell, Squilla, Bass and Jones