

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 050023)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee on Finance to hold hearings on the possibility of creating a Customer Amnesty Program within the Philadelphia Gas Works to prevent residents from getting shut off during the winter months.

WHEREAS, PGW has shut off thousands of low income families from basic and essential gas service; and

WHEREAS, It could cost these low income families up to \$1,500 just to get service back on; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia citizens who are unable to pay these increased amounts would be denied a service that is a basic necessity of life; and

WHEREAS, Households with sick, disabled and elderly individuals, face more imminent health consequences, and possibly death, as these families can hardly maintain their often fragile health without utility services in the cold winter months; and

WHEREAS, Low income families below 150% of the poverty level are hardly able to pay for basic necessities such as housing, food, transportation, healthcare, and utilities; and

WHEREAS, PGW shut offs would result in the harmful deprivation of not only gas service, but also low income families will do without other basic necessities; and

WHEREAS, PGW shut offs could lead to homelessness, long-term absences from work and school, and a loss of any realistic chance for attaining economic sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, Current PGW assistance programs require monthly payments that are still too high for low income families at 150% of poverty level and below; and

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WHEREAS, PGW is unlikely to collect arrears from these customers, while these customers cannot afford basic necessities or to reconnect their service; and

WHEREAS, With reconnection fees so high, PGW will guarantee that they will never receive payments from these lost customers; and

WHEREAS, This Council recommends that a Customer Amnesty Program be created by amending PGW's Customer Responsibility Program by forgiving \$1,500 for delinquent customers who have been shut off from service for six months or more, and owe \$1,500 or more in arrears; and allow customers to pay no more than 5% of their monthly income if customer is 150% of the poverty level or below; and phase in the customer's payment obligations to comply with the already existing Customer Responsibility Program (CRP) levels within six months; and

WHEREAS, By amending CRP in this manner, PGW would be able to reconnect with its delinquent customers and begin to receive payments PGW otherwise would have never gotten; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Finance to hold hearings on the possibility of creating a Customer Amnesty Program within the Philadelphia Gas Works to prevent residents from getting shut off during the winter months.

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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-fifth of January, 2005.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Blackwell

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Blackwell Mariano, Cohen, Council President Verna, Councilmembers Reynolds Brown, Goode, DiCicco, Rizzo, Miller, Tasco, Kenney, Clarke, O'Neill, Kelly, Ramos and Nutter