

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 051207)

RESOLUTION

Urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 1005 which will assist low and moderate income citizens to re-establish gas service with public utilities.

WHEREAS, Federal assistance for the cost of home energy has been stagnant since 1982 and Pennsylvania's share of federal LIHEAP funds was cut this year by \$21 million, which will cause 25,000 low-income families to suffer this winter without heat; and

WHEREAS, Even before the cut, federal energy assistance to Pennsylvania is only sufficient to provide funds to one-half of all households who are qualified to receive assistance under federal guidelines, both statewide and within Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is only one of two cold weather states in the Northeast and Midwest that does not provide any supplemental assistance to households that qualify for LIHEAP; and

WHEREAS, On December 1, 2005, City Council unanimously passed Resolution No. 051156, which urges the Pennsylvania General Assembly to pass House Bill 1539 that would provide, for the first time, \$24.6 million in supplemental state funds for LIHEAP by redirecting 1 mill of the Pennsylvania Gross Receipts Tax on energy companies to the Emergency Energy Assistance Fund; and

WHEREAS, As a public utility, the Philadelphia Gas Works' rates are the highest in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the typical City row house customer will pay approximately \$2000 this year in gas bills, a 21 percent increase from last year; and

WHEREAS, Considering the high cost of gas bills and the limited amount of federal and state home energy financial assistance, State Senators Mary Jo White and LeAnna M. Washington introduced Senate Bill 1005 to help low and moderate income constituents by limiting reconnection fees to \$50, limiting security deposits to \$100, and providing for an affordable payment program for past due gas bills; and

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WHEREAS, For many constituents who lost gas service, the biggest impediment towards reconnecting their gas service is the payment of all, or a significant percentage, of their past due gas bills, which may equal thousands of dollars; and

WHEREAS, Constituents are forced to come up with hundreds of dollars, which they do not have, in order to re-establish gas service and often these citizens, out of last resort, enter into predatory or payday loans or use illegal or unsafe means just to provide the vital need of heat for their home; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby urge the Pennsylvania General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 1005 which will assist low and moderate income citizens to re-establish gas service with state public utilities.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution be sent to the Majority and Minority leadership of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Philadelphia Delegation of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and the Governor as a representation of the true wishes and sincere sentiments 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 fifteenth of December, 2005.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Tasco, Miller and Mariano

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