

HB0576



98TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2013 and 2014

HB0576

Introduced 1/25/2013, by Rep. Michael J. Madigan

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

220 ILCS 5/19-125

Amends the Public Utilities Act. Makes a technical change in a Section concerning consumer education.

LRB098 03406 AMC 33421 b

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning regulation.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Public Utilities Act is amended by changing
5 Section 19-125 as follows:

6 (220 ILCS 5/19-125)

7 Sec. 19-125. Consumer education.

8 (a) The ~~The~~ Commission shall make available upon request
9 and at no charge, and shall make available to the public on the
10 Internet through the State of Illinois World Wide Web site:

11 (1) a list of all certified alternative gas suppliers
12 serving residential and small commercial customers within
13 the service area of each gas utility including, in the case
14 of the Internet, computer links to available web sites of
15 the certified alternative gas suppliers;

16 (2) a list of all certified alternative gas suppliers
17 serving residential or small commercial customers that
18 have been found in the last 3 years by the Commission
19 pursuant to Section 10-108 to have failed to provide
20 service in accordance with this Act;

21 (3) guidelines to assist customers in determining
22 which gas supplier is most appropriate for each customer;
23 and

1 (4) Internet links to providers of information that
2 enables customers to compare prices and services of gas
3 utilities and alternative gas suppliers, if and when that
4 information is available.

5 (a-5) The Commission shall develop no later than 6 months
6 after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 95th
7 General Assembly and maintain consumer education information
8 to help residential and small commercial consumers understand
9 their gas supply options and their rights and responsibilities.
10 The Commission shall publish the consumer education
11 information on its World Wide Web site.

12 (a-10) To assist the Commission in developing consumer
13 education information, the Commission shall form a working
14 group that shall consist of representatives of gas utilities
15 with residential and small commercial gas transportation
16 service programs, alternative gas suppliers, the Attorney
17 General, the Citizens Utility Board, and the Commission.

18 (a-15) At a minimum, the consumer education information
19 developed by the Commission shall include explanations or
20 descriptions of the following:

21 (1) The choices available to consumers to take gas
22 service from an alternative retail gas supplier or remain
23 as a retail customer of the gas utility.

24 (2) A consumer's rights and responsibilities in
25 receiving service from an alternative retail gas supplier
26 or remaining as a retail customer of the gas utility.

1 (3) The gas utility's role in delivering gas,
2 including, but not limited to, utility response to calls
3 for service and gas leaks.

4 (4) The legal obligations of alternative retail gas
5 suppliers.

6 (5) The components of a bill that could be received by
7 a customer taking delivery services.

8 (6) The procedures available to customers to address
9 complaints against a gas utility or an alternative retail
10 gas supplier and a list of phone numbers and other contact
11 information for the Commission, the Attorney General, or
12 the Citizens Utility Board.

13 (7) Guidance to assist consumers in making educated
14 decisions when choosing their natural gas provider,
15 including:

16 (A) how to compare prices;

17 (B) questions to ask when considering natural gas
18 providers; and

19 (C) current and historical utility gas rates.

20 (8) The availability of the "Do Not Contact List" for
21 those who do not wish to be solicited by natural gas
22 providers.

23 (b) In any service area where customers are able to choose
24 their natural gas supplier, the Commission shall require gas
25 utilities and alternative gas suppliers to inform customers of
26 how they may contact the Commission in order to obtain

1 information about the customer choice program.

2 (c) The Commission shall adopt a uniform disclosure that
3 alternative gas suppliers shall be required to complete for
4 each product offering. The uniform disclosure shall contain, at
5 a minimum:

6 (1) for products with a fixed price per therm, the
7 price per therm;

8 (2) the length of the initial term of the product, or,
9 if applicable, the expiration date of the initial term of
10 the product;

11 (3) the amount of the termination fees, if any;

12 (4) the amount of the administrative fees, other fees,
13 or recurring charges, if any, to be listed separately for
14 each and every fee or charge;

15 (5) for products with a variable price per therm, the
16 terms of such variability, including, but not limited to,
17 any index that is used to calculate the price and any
18 additional charges, costs and fees; and

19 (6) for products where a customer's charges are a fixed
20 amount per billing period regardless of the market price
21 for natural gas or the customer's natural gas consumption
22 during the billing period, the billing period covered.

23 If the alternative gas supplier will not offer a
24 different product for new customers as of the first of the
25 month, then the alternative gas supplier does not have to
26 provide new information until the first day of the month in

1 which a different product or products are being offered.

2 The Commission shall post this information on its World
3 Wide Web site in a manner that shall enable customers to
4 compare prices, terms, and conditions offered by the
5 alternative gas suppliers. The website shall be updated at
6 least monthly and the Commission shall maintain this
7 information on its website for at least 12 months to allow
8 customers to compare the historical plans and prices for
9 all alternative gas suppliers.

10 (d) The Commission shall make available in print, upon
11 request and at no charge and on its World Wide Web site,
12 information on which customers of alternative gas suppliers
13 serving residential and small commercial customers may address
14 any complaint with regard to an alternative gas supplier's
15 obligations under Section 19-115 of this Article, including the
16 provision of service in accordance with the terms of its
17 contract, sales tactics, and rates. The Commission shall
18 maintain a summary by category and provider of all formal and
19 informal complaints it receives pursuant to this Section, and
20 it shall publish the summary on a quarterly basis on its World
21 Wide Web site. Individual customer information shall not be
22 included in the summary.

23 (e) The provisions of this Section shall apply only to
24 alternative gas suppliers serving or seeking to serve
25 residential and small commercial customers and only to the
26 extent such alternative gas suppliers provide services to

1 residential and small commercial customers.

2 (Source: P.A. 95-1051, eff. 4-10-09.)