

# SB0629



## 98TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2013 and 2014

SB0629

Introduced 1/24/2013, by Sen. John J. Cullerton

### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

220 ILCS 5/19-125

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

LRB098 04436 JWD 34464 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.)