

2021 -- H 5345

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LC001058  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS - TERMINATION OF SERVICE TO RESTAURANTS

Introduced By: Representatives Morgan, and Nardone

Date Introduced: February 05, 2021

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 39 of the General Laws entitled "PUBLIC UTILITIES AND  
2 CARRIERS" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 1.3

4 TERMINATION OF SERVICE TO RESTAURANTS

5 **39-1.3-1. Termination of service.**

6 (a) No public utility that distributes electricity or supplies natural or manufactured gas,  
7 electric, water, sewer, cable or telephone service shall terminate service to any restaurant for failure  
8 to pay an outstanding indebtedness for service, without first complying with all rules and  
9 regulations for termination issued by the commission.

10 (b) During a declared state of emergency issued by the governor pursuant to the provisions  
11 of § 30-15-9, the commission shall exercise its emergency powers granted pursuant to § 39-1-32 to  
12 suspend the payment of all bills for service rendered to restaurants during the declared emergency  
13 until the state of emergency is terminated by the governor or the general assembly.

14 **39-1.3-2. Collection of debt.**

15 (a) Upon termination of the state of emergency, the commission shall authorize the  
16 collection of the debt from restaurants by the public utilities in the third month after the restaurants  
17 are allowed to operate at one hundred percent (100%) capacity with pre-emergency closing times  
18 for service.

1           **(b) The collection plan shall consist of a thirty-six (36) month interest free payment plan**  
2 **for restaurants to repay the past amount due as well as pay their current charges for services**  
3 **rendered.**

4           **39-1.3-3. Applicability.**

5           **This chapter shall apply retroactively to the declared state of emergency issued by the**  
6 **governor during March, 2020 as well as prospectively to all declared state of emergencies.**

7           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage and apply retroactively to March,  
8 2020.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS - TERMINATION OF SERVICE TO  
RESTAURANTS

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1           This act would authorize the public utilities commission during declared state of  
2 emergencies issued by the governor to utilize its emergency powers to suspend all utility charges  
3 rendered to restaurants until the termination of the emergency. This act would also provide a thirty-  
4 six (36) month interest free repayment plan for restaurants to make payments to reduce the past  
5 amount due as well as the current charges commencing three (3) months after the termination of  
6 the emergency.

7           This act would take effect upon passage and apply retroactively to March, 2020.

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