

House Bill 667

By: Representative Drenner of the 85th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 1 of Title 46 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 general provisions relative to public utilities, so as to provide for preferred payment plans for
3 utility customers on fixed incomes; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws;
4 and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 **SECTION 1.**

7 Chapter 1 of Title 46 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the general
8 provisions relative to public utilities, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as
9 follows:

10 "46-1-6.

11 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'eligible customer' means any residential
12 customer of a public utility who is receiving:

13 (1) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Aid to the Aged, Blind and
14 Disabled (AABD);

15 (2) Benefits from General Assistance or Supplemental Security Income;

16 (3) Income from social security benefits or veterans benefits; or

17 (4) Unemployment compensation benefits.

18 (b) An eligible customer who is billed monthly and who can demonstrate that his or her
19 primary source of income is derived from a benefit that is received during the ten-day
20 period after the eligible customer's regular due date for a utility bill shall be entitled to a
21 preferred payment date to enable the eligible customer to submit timely payments.

22 (c) When an eligible customer pays late two times in a 12 month period, the utility shall
23 notify the eligible customer of the availability of a preferred payment date. The utility shall
24 make a record on the eligible customer's account of the notification, and notification shall
25 be made by:

26 (1) Message included in the eligible customer's bill;

27 (2) Separate written communication; or

28 (3) Verbal communication.

29 (d) The utility shall inform an eligible customer of the following options from which the
30 eligible customer may choose:

31 (1) Enter into a budget payment plan with a preferred payment date that is not more than
32 ten days after the eligible customer's regular billing date and is agreed upon by the
33 eligible customer and the company; or

34 (2) Establish a preferred payment date that shall not be more than ten days after the
35 eligible customer's regular billing date.

36 (e) If the eligible customer fails to pay on or before the preferred payment date more than
37 four times in a 12 month period, the utility may remove the eligible customer's account
38 from the preferred payment date and return the eligible customer to the regular bill due
39 date. After the removal of an eligible customer, the utility shall not be obliged to offer the
40 preferred payment date to that same customer for a period of 12 months."

41 **SECTION 2.**

42 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.