



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

NEWS

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Governor Quinn Signs Bill to Aid Tens of Thousands of Low-Income Utility Customers

Bill creates payment plan option, caps costs, expands energy efficiency plan

CHICAGO – July 10, 2009. Governor Pat Quinn today signed a law that will benefit tens of thousands of low-income utility customers. Senate Bill 1918 creates a payment plan option for low-income customers, caps the amount those customers pay for utilities, and expands an energy efficiency program.

“Energy costs continue to rise and Illinois families are feeling the crunch,” said Governor Quinn. “This legislation allows many working people to keep their energy costs down and use that extra money to pay for other important and basic needs.”

Senate Bill 1918, sponsored by Senator Kimberly Lightford (D-Westchester) and Representative Robert Flider (D-Decatur), was passed overwhelmingly with bipartisan support.

The bill requires utility companies to participate in bill payment assistance programs for customers through a Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP). The PIPP makes it possible for tens of thousands of low-income households to pay an affordable amount each month for their gas and electricity bills, allowing eligible customers to pay no more than 6 percent of their income towards their energy costs. The program targets households across the state with incomes up to 150 percent of the federal poverty level guideline. (Additional information included in attached fact sheet).

“This new law protects the interests of consumers by mandating significant ethics reforms at the agency that sets energy prices and by making it easier for families to invest in energy efficiency programs and bring down the cost of their utility bills,” said Attorney General Lisa Madigan. “This law also creates a critical program to help low-income families manage their utility bills and end the cycle of disconnection and re-connection.”

The bill also allows electric and gas utility customers to purchase cost-effective energy efficiency products or services with no required up-front payment and expands the program to include natural gas. Customers who take advantage of this program can pay the costs of products and services over time on their utility bills.

The program will be implemented by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Limited enrollment PIPP pilots will be available starting September of 2009. The full implementation of the PIPP statewide will occur by September 2011. For more information about the PIPP, consumers can call 1-877-411-9276.

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