

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

IN RE: RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING
THE TERMINATION OF RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC,
GAS AND WATER UTILITY SERVICE

DOCKET NO. 3876

NOTICE OF RULEMAKING AND PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to the provisions of Rhode Island General Laws §§39-1 and 42-35 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended, the Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) hereby gives notice that it will conduct a hearing on **Thursday, October 11, 2007 at 10:00 A.M.** in the first-floor hearing room of the Public Utilities Commission at 89 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island for the purpose of affording all interested persons an opportunity to submit data, views, or arguments, orally or in writing, in response to the Commission’s plan to amend the current Rules and Regulations Governing the Termination of Residential Electric, Gas and Water Utility Service (“Termination Rules”) adopted by the Commission on May 1, 2002, as amended January 10, 2007.

The purpose of the amended regulations is to make the following technical changes to the Termination Rules: delete reference to a Department of Labor and Training (“DLT”) ID card to prove temporary unemployment upon information that DLT no longer issues such cards, update Appendix A to include the current Rhode Island Median Income levels for determining financial status, revise language of the Termination Notice on Form III to reflect requested changes from the Wiley Center as accepted by the electric and gas utility companies in 2005, remove the illustrative examples that appear in Appendix D of the Termination Rules, and add a severability clause.

The proposed amendments also make the following substantive changes:

(1) the addition of a payment plan option for very low income customers that allows for

arrearage forgiveness over three years in accordance with Rhode Island Gen. Laws § 39-2-1(d)(1)-(2);

(2) the addition of an additional protection for financial hardship customers who have a child under twelve (12) months of age domiciled in the household in accordance with Public Law Ch. 07-419;

(3) the removal of a provision which allows non-lawyers to represent customers at formal hearings before the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers and the addition of language that allows only lawyers permitted to practice law in the State of Rhode Island to do so (nothing takes away the right of a customer to appear *pro se*);

(4) the removal of a provision in Part V, Section (4)(A) which allows utility companies to offer more lenient payment plans than those allowed by the Termination Rules;

(5) the removal of Part VII, Section 1(A) of the Termination Rules allowing the Commission to order immediate restoration of service while amending Part VII, Section 1(B) to allow the Administrator of the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers to order immediate restoration without determining that the Commission is available and removal of Part VII, Section 1(C) which requires a written order to be issued.

The regulations will apply to all residential customers of regulated electric, gas and water utility service.

The rules and regulations, in both form existing and proposed in a redacted version specifying additions are on file at the Clerk's office and may be examined there. Copies of the proposed regulations may be obtained in person at the Commission's office, by mail by calling 941-4500, ext. 107, or may be accessed at www.ripuc.org/eventsactions/proposedregs.html.

Interested parties and members of the public wishing to offer data, views or arguments regarding the amended regulations may do so either orally on the day of the hearing or in writing prior to the hearing date. In addition, written comments will be accepted at the above address

until 4:00 P.M. on October 29, 2007. An original and nine (9) copies of written comments must be filed with the Clerk.

Reference is also made to Chapters 42-35 and 39-1 of the Rhode Island General Laws. Specifically Sections, 42-35-1, 42-35-2, 43-35-3, 42-35-4, 42-35-5, 39-1-1, 39-1-3, 39-1-11, 39-1-18 and 39-1-38.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE HANDICAPPED. INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING INTERPRETER SERVICES FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED MUST NOTIFY THE COMMISSION CLERK'S OFFICE AT 941-4500, SEVENTY-TWO HOURS IN ADVANCE OF HEARING DATE.

Luly E. Massaro
Commission Clerk
September 29, 2007