

HOUSE No. 2929

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

RoseLee Vincent

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act requiring gas or electric companies to notify residential customers prior to discontinuing gas or electric service.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

RoseLee Vincent

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

16th Suffolk

HOUSE No. 2929

By Ms. Vincent of Revere, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2929) of RoseLee Vincent relative to requiring gas or electric companies to notify residential customers prior to discontinuing gas or electric service. Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act requiring gas or electric companies to notify residential customers prior to discontinuing gas or electric service.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 164 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by inserting after section 124I the following section:

3 Section 124J. A gas or electric company shall notify any residential customer of
4 scheduled discontinuance of service prior to said discontinuance, using the following methods:

5 1. By certified mail 10 days prior to service disconnection to the mailing address of
6 the residential customer, the mailing shall consist of a return letter and a postage paid envelope
7 to be signed by said customer as evidence that said customer is aware that service is to be
8 discontinued at that address at a date and time certain;

9 2. If the procedures in paragraph 1 are unsuccessful, by e-mail no later than 48 hours
10 prior to discontinuance of service, to the contact e-mail address of the residential customer;
11 provided that said e-mail shall contain a request for a reply e-mail by said customer stating that

12 said customer is aware that service is to be discontinued at that address at a date and time certain;
13 or

14 3. If the procedures in paragraphs 1 and 2 are unsuccessful, then no later than 24
15 hours prior to discontinuance of service, by a telephone call by the gas or electric company to the
16 contact telephone number of the residential customer where service is scheduled to be
17 disconnected, providing notification of termination to said customer; provided that an audio
18 record of the telephone conversation be preserved by the gas or electric company as evidence
19 that said customer was notified that service is to be discontinued at that address at a date and
20 time certain;

21 4. If the procedures in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 are unsuccessful, prior to any attempt to
22 discontinue service, an employee or agent of the gas or electric company shall make a personal
23 visit to the residence of the residential customer to make every attempt possible to notify said
24 customer in person. If said customer is in attendance where gas or electric service is to be
25 disconnected, the employee or agent shall obtain the signature of said customer on a form
26 providing written evidence of notification that service is to be discontinued at that address at a
27 date and time certain.

28 Successful residential customer notification by using any of the above methods shall
29 serve as evidence that the residential customer has been duly notified of said discontinuance of
30 service. If none of the above attempts are successful, the gas or electric company shall, prior to
31 discontinuing service, notify in writing the police department of the city or town where the
32 service is to be discontinued. Said written notice shall contain the name, address and telephone
33 number of the residential customer at the residence where service is to be discontinued.

34 A gas or electric company shall, after a hearing by the department, be assessed a penalty
35 of \$500.00 for each violation of the provisions of this section. Said assessment to be paid by the
36 gas or electric company to the city or town of the residence where service was to be
37 disconnected.