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## UTILITY PROTECTIONS FOR ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL

House Bill 4660

Sponsor: Rep. John Garfield

Committee: Veterans Affairs and  
Homeland Security

Complete to 5-12-03

### A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4660 AS INTRODUCED 5-8-03

The bill would amend Public Act 3 of 1939, which regulates the provision of gas and electric service in Michigan, to grant shut-off protection to a residential customer of gas and electric service who was called, or whose spouse was called, to full-time active military service during a time of war or national or state emergency.

A “qualifying customer” could apply for shut-off protection for electric or gas service by notifying the provider that he or she needed assistance because of a reduction in household income as the result of a call to active duty status in military. An electric or gas service provider could not discontinue service to the residence of a qualifying customer who had applied for protection. A qualifying customer could receive shut-off protection for up to 90 days, but upon application, the provider could grant one or more 90-day extensions. (It appears that the provider could deny such an extension.) A qualifying customer who received protection under the bill would still be eligible for protection provided under the Michigan Military Act.

The bill would define “qualifying customer” as a residential household customer who met all of the following requirements:

- had income reduced because he or she (or his or her spouse) was called to full-time active military service by the president or the governor during a time of declared national or state emergency or war;
- needed assistance to maintain electric and gas service;
- had notified the provider of the need for assistance and, if required, had provided verification of the call to active duty status; and
- had notified the provider of the end to active duty status.

Verification of active duty status. A service provider could request verification of the customer’s call to active duty status, and a qualifying customer receiving assistance would have to notify the provider of the end of the call to active duty status as soon as that status was known.

Payment. Unless waived by the provider, the shut-off protection would not void or limit the customer’s obligation to pay for electric or gas services received during the time of assistance. A provider would have to do all of the following: establish a repayment plan requiring minimum monthly payments that allowed the qualifying customer to pay any past due

House Bill 4660 (5-12-03)

amounts over a reasonable time period of one year or less; provide qualifying customers with information regarding any governmental, provider, or other assistance programs; and provide qualifying customers with access to existing information on ways to minimize or conserve their service usage.

Applicability of PSC rules and standards. These provisions would not affect or amend any Public Service Commission rules or orders pertaining to billing standards. If the qualifying customer did not follow the terms and conditions of the repayment plan, the provider could follow the procedures in the PSC's rules on consumer standards and billing practices for electric and gas residential service.

MCL 460.9c

House Bill 4660 (5-12-03)

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