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## SENATE BILL NO. 1447

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor  
on January 30, 2023)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Edwards)

A BILL to direct the State Corporation Commission to conduct a proceeding to establish limitations on disconnections of utility service; investor-owned electric utilities, electric cooperatives, municipal electric utilities, natural gas utilities, water utilities, wastewater utilities.

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

1. § 1. That the State Corporation Commission (the Commission) shall conduct a proceeding for the purpose of establishing limitations on the authority of an investor-owned electric utility, natural gas utility, water utility, wastewater utility, or electric cooperative subject to regulation by the Commission to disconnect electric, natural gas, water, or wastewater service to any customer for the nonpayment of bills or fees (i) in the case of a statewide emergency declared by the Governor in response to a widespread communicable disease of public health threat, (ii) during temperature weather extremes, or (iii) on a Friday, weekend, state holiday, or the day immediately preceding a state holiday. The limitations shall be consistent with the public interest. In the proceeding establishing such limitations, the Commission shall consult with the Commissioner of Health, the Commissioner of Social Services, the Virginia Poverty Law Center, the Virginia League of Social Service Executives, electric utilities, natural gas utilities, water utilities, wastewater utilities, advocacy organizations, and any other persons that the Commission deems appropriate. As a part of the proceeding, the Commission shall review current regulations and update the regulations to implement such limitations on disconnection. The Commission shall (a) adopt such regulations in accordance with the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, (b) set a schedule to review and update such regulations periodically, and (c) ensure that such regulations become effective no later than November 1, 2023.

§ 2. Municipal electric utilities, natural gas utilities, water utilities, and wastewater utilities not subject to regulation by the Commission are encouraged to adopt an internal operating policy (i) to suspend disconnecting service to residential customers for the nonpayment of bills or fees for 30 days in the case of any state of emergency declared by the Governor in response to a widespread communicable disease of public health threat; (ii) to avoid disconnecting service to residential customers for nonpayment of bills or fees on a Friday, weekend, state holiday, or the day immediately preceding a state holiday; and (iii) for municipal electric and natural gas utilities not subject to regulation by the Commission, to avoid disconnecting service to residential customers for nonpayment of bills or fees during temperature weather extremes.