

Vermont Public Utility Commission reviewed the bill text and suggested 2 edits that were then incorporated into H88. First, they pushed the due date back to at least June 1, 2026.

Second, residential service doesn't include campgrounds so we removed campground users from the definition of residential service.

Some states use a certain temperature like 92 degrees and others specify National Weather Service alerts.

Some "northern states" that are among the 19 that protect consumers during times of extreme heat include Oregon, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and Rhode Island.

I am committed to do more work on my end if there are questions I can research to help move this piece of legislation forward.

Below is my testimony from today.

Extreme heat protection legislation for utilities in homes aims to prevent electricity shut offs during heat waves and ensures continued access to those essential services during periods of extreme heat. Currently, only 19 states have mandatory limits on utility disconnections during high heat to protect consumers from losing electricity service due to nonpayment, as of July 1, 2023

2023 was the world's hottest year on record, [by far](#), and the impacts of climate change promise continued extreme weather. Extreme heat and climate change affect all communities, but historically marginalized Black and Latino communities are most at risk for dangerous health impacts.

A [new report](#) from the National Consumer Law Center examines the impacts of extreme heat on utility consumers and recommends safeguarding utility services for under-resourced consumers facing extreme weather.

***Protecting Access to Essential Utility Service During Extreme Heat and Climate Change***, written with support from and collaboration with the Center for Energy, Poverty, and Climate, outlines specific actions policymakers and regulators must take to address the unaffordability of, and need for continued access to, essential utility service during extreme weather and year-round.

Nearly 60% of the U.S. population lives in states with no summer shut-off protections. By passing H.88, we can work to make a dent in

that 60%, getting the bill across the Governor's desk before the weather turns warm, extending protections to all Vermonters, regardless of a non-payment issue.

Extreme heat conditions put lives at risk, and someone's inability to pay a utility on time does not warrant putting their safety in jeopardy for nonpayment. Shutoff protections are the least we can do to protect vulnerable individuals and families from the effects of extreme heat.

Recent data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration confirms that unaffordability of essential utility service remains a problem for [nearly 30% of the U.S. population](#), and that lower income households, elderly people, households with children, renters, and families who identify as either Black or African American or as Hispanic or Latino reported higher rates of energy insecurity.

Low-income utility customers face increasingly difficult decisions during extreme weather, often forgoing food, medicine, and other life essentials to pay their energy bills. If you are struggling financially, you are likely hesitant to run multiple fans or turn on air conditioning during extreme heat.

As extreme heat intensifies as a result of our shifting climate, this legislation would replace the age-old practice of disconnecting utility customers due to their inability to pay. Instead, it will be replaced with year round protections from disconnection, ensuring safety for our vulnerable populations including but not limited to older adults, households with children and medically compromised customers in dangerous weather conditions. We should not be punishing people because they are poor when we are experiencing extreme temperatures.

Public Utility Connection 3.300 (Disconnection of Essential Service) protects Vermont consumers during times of extreme cold.