

# HB 641 – Delayed Power Cutoff for Seriously Ill Customers

## Legislative Rubric from Science for Georgia

[HB 641](#) - Electric suppliers must delay discontinuation of electrical service to residential customers who have serious illnesses that would be aggravated by removing service. These delays can be renewed.

Criteria	Variables			
<b>Impact</b> <b>Who is going to be impacted? Is it equitable? List stakeholders &amp; opinions.</b>	Negative		Positive	
	The termination of power to ill customers can have <a href="#">life-threatening effects</a> . Electricity is necessary to refrigerate medicines and provide power to necessary oxygen machines, hospital beds, and electric wheelchairs. Heat and cold can exacerbate conditions, stressing the cardiovascular, respiratory, and immune systems, especially in elderly populations. Beyond these acute issues, lower income consumers of electricity suffering from illnesses have a <a href="#">higher risk</a> of negative health outcomes when resources must be used for power instead of other needs, including going without medical care and food in times of energy insecurity. Continuing power to these customers mitigates these effects. Currently, Georgia Power has a provision to delay disconnecting customers if they show proof of a medical condition, but other small electric utilities are <a href="#">not included</a> in this requirement. This bill would apply to any electric provider.			
<b>Reach</b> <b>Does it reach its target audience?</b>	0 - No impact on target audience.	<b>1 - Impacts narrow segment.</b>	2 - Impacts Majority; Exceptions	3 - Impacts entire target audience
	The bill <a href="#">narrowly applies</a> to residential customers with a “serious, life-threatening condition” and a written statement from a physicians, county board of health, hospital, or clinic certifying the condition would be worsened by electric power. This necessitates that the consumer can access healthcare services to furnish the note. Lower income and racial minority communities, alongside families with children, are associated with a <a href="#">lower ability</a> to tolerate service disruptions and increased difficulty with accessing healthcare services and medication amid energy insecurity. This bill would address major challenges to these vulnerable groups, should they meet the criteria.			
<b>Scientific Merit</b> <b>Does it utilize scientific research accurately?</b>	<b>YES - this does follow scientific research accurately. Here's why....</b>		NO - this does not present scientific research accurately.	
	Heat and cold are shown to <a href="#">stress</a> the body’s systems, including the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, and extreme heat and cold can be fatal. Immediate utility shutoffs cause <a href="#">unsafe</a> indoor temperatures and remove the ability to use essential medical services or equipment. Additionally, energy insecurity is associated with asthma, pneumonia, diabetes, hypertension, and depressive disorders. The likelihood of <a href="#">acute and worse</a> chronic conditions rises with energy insecurity.			

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<b>Financial Feasibility</b> <b>Is it financially feasible?</b> <b>or does this have burdensome finances (higher taxes, future costs, etc)?</b>	0 - Extremely high costs	1 - Expensive but can be done	<b>2 - Slight</b>	3 - No financial burden
	Little is noted in the language of the bill surrounding the liability to pay debts of services, focusing instead on preventing discontinuation. Georgia Power provides a grace period of <a href="#">two months</a> to receive payment.			
<b>Political Feasibility</b> <b>Level of opposition and partisan disagreement.</b>	0 - Majority disagreed, regardless of party.	1 – Split along party lines	<b>2 - Minimal Opposition</b>	3 - Complete consensus (zero to five 'Nays').
	This bill is considered <a href="#">bipartisan</a> , passing the House with 134 yeas and 28 nay votes.			
<b>Measurable Metrics?</b> <b>We recommend looking at these 3 metrics. Is the data available or being measured?</b>	0 - no data	1 - some data / not accessible	<b>2 - most data / somewhat accessible</b>	3 - complete transparency
	Data is available on the importance of electricity to health outcomes, and narrative stories of consumers who have suffered due to power shutoffs are also widely available. Seriously ill customers remains a vague term, and doctors notes will be relied on as the method of showing need.			