Consumer Protection & Regulatory Issues

Low-income households need stronger consumer protections and regulatory policies to prevent service terminations and other threats to affordable and continuous utility services.

Administrative & Regulatory Outcomes

- 2013 DPH memo on Submetering of Electric and Gas, Sept. 5, 2013
- Model Program Helps Older Adults Avoid Utility Liens on Their Homes, December 2012
- California Adopts Order to Reduce Utility Disconnections of Vulnerable Households, April 2012
- Order: Vermont Public Service Board Approval of a New Low Income Electric Bill Assistance Program under the Administrative and Regulatory Outcomes, July 22, 2011
- Model Settlement Protects Vulnerable Consumers from Utility Disconnections, Dec. 27, 2010

Policy Briefs, Reports & Press Releases

- Issue Brief: Massachusetts Residential Utility Customers Still Owe Nearly $100M More in Arrears than at the Start of the Pandemic, February 2022
- Fact Sheet: What States Can Do to Help Consumers: Energy Insecurity, January 2020
- Policy brief: Model Utility Consumer Protections When Natural Disasters Strike, August 2018
- Report: Helping Low-Income Utility Customers Manage Overdue Bills through Arrearage Management Programs (AMP), September 2013
- Report: Rethinking Prepaid Utility Service: Customers at Risk, June 2012

Full Utility Credit Reporting

- Issue Brief: The Credit Score Pandemic Paradox and Credit Invisibility, Feb. 2021
- Policy Brief Full Utility Credit Reporting: Risks to Low Income Consumers, July 2012
- Presentation to National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissions, June 2010

Policy Analysis

- Group letter to the ACEEE rejecting characterization of prepaid utility service as an energy efficiency program, March 22, 2017
• Group letter to the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in support of the nomination of Ron Binz as Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, July 9, 2013
• Comments and Reply Comments of the Iowa Bureau of Energy Assistance regarding Prepaid Meters, August 2011
• Using Nontraditional Credit Information: Boon or Bane? Do Alternative Credit Scores and Credit Reports Really Help Low-Income Consumers?, June 2009
• Comments of Massachusetts Energy Directors Association and Low-Income Weatherization and Fuel Assistance Network – Investigation into Expanding Low-income Consumer Protections and Assistance, March 28, 2008

Additional Resources

• Presentation: Advocacy to Manage Low-Income Utility Debt in the Age of Covid-19, May 26, 2020
• Presentation: The Utility Customer Financial Impact of COVID-19: The Need For Flexibility and Reform in Utility Billing, Credit and Collections, May 13, 2020
• Presentation: Disparate Energy Insecurity Impacts: The Need For Racial Justice in Utility Billing, Credit and Collections, April 14, 2020
• NCLC’s Energy and Utility Publications and Resources
• Research Resources Regarding Needs and Impacts Relating to Low Income Utility and Energy Consumers