

## State of New Jersey

## Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Increasing Penalties for Energy Slamming

04/17/2019

**TRENTON** - Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation that will increase civil penalties for energy slamming practices, which involve changing consumers' electric power or gas supplier without their knowledge or consent.

The law (A1683/S1990) will protect New Jersey consumers from the illegal practice of energy slamming. Penalties will increase from \$10,000 for the first offense, and not more than \$25,000 for the second and each subsequent offense, to \$20,000 for the first offense, and not more than \$50,000 for the second and each subsequent offense.

"Bad actors that engage in energy slamming prey upon New Jersey residents that are simply trying to keep their power on," **said Governor Phil Murphy**. "This legislation will protect all New Jersey residents from deceptive and misleading companies that scam consumers out of their hard-earned money."

"Today is an important day for energy consumers all over New Jersey," **said Senator Nellie Pou**. "Standing between consumers and illegal, predatory providers is exactly what we should be doing as a state. We can't guarantee that no one will break the law, but we can make sure they are properly dissuaded from attempting to in the first place and properly punished if they ever do."

"Companies that illegally acquire information about consumers and then go door to door with the intent to defraud them on their energy bills, must to be met with severe consequences," **said Senator Linda Greenstein**. "Fraud is a serious offense and this law will make perpetrators of energy slamming rethink their nefarious methods."

"There are overly aggressive operators preying on vulnerable ratepayers," **said Assemblyman Ron Dancer**. "Seniors, especially, are often victimized by 'slamming,' having their electric or gas suppliers changed and their rates increased without consent. The significant penalties established by this law are strong deterrents to energy scammers."

"Changing consumers' electric power or gas supplier without their knowledge or consent is unacceptable," **said Assemblyman Daniel Benson**. "Residents should always be kept informed when any change on their energy bill takes place, especially if it results in a higher monthly payment. Raising penalties is a deterrent for these types of unfair, unscrupulous practices."

"In the past year, certain third-party energy suppliers took advantage of an unusually cold winter to change consumers' energy suppliers without their knowledge or consent," **said Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling**. "Energy slamming is anti-consumerism at its best and it impacts families in a way that hurts them the most, their budgets. This new law takes a much needed step to protect residents from this unfair business practice."

"A number of consumers complained of these unauthorized changes which resulted in skyrocketing energy utility bills," **said Assemblyman Paul Moriarty**. "Doubling civil penalties for slamming practices will help to discourage third-party energy suppliers from taking advantage of consumers in the future."

"Any ratepayer is susceptible to slamming, but for seniors on a fixed income or families struggling to make ends meet, it is a threat to their financial security," **said Assemblywoman Amy Handlin**. "This bill increases penalties to a level that will make deceitful marketers think twice about ripping off the public."

Primary sponsors of the bill include Senators Nellie Pou and Linda Greenstein; and Assemblymembers Ron Dancer, Daniel Benson, Eric Houghtaling, Amy Handlin, and Paul Moriarty.

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