

Governor Phil Murphy

Acting Governor Way Signs Legislation Establishing Summer Termination Program for Utility Shutoffs

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Protects Vulnerable Residents from Utility Service Discontinuation During Extreme Heat

TRENTON – Today, Acting Governor Way signed A5563/S4361, directing the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to establish a Summer Termination Program. The program mirrors the existing Winter Termination Program and aims to protect vulnerable residents from utility service discontinuation between June 15 and August 31 each year. This bill signing coincides with New Jersey Climate Week in an effort to support residents impacted by extreme temperatures as a result of the climate crisis.

"Today, we are building on our efforts to ease the regional electricity affordability crisis for New Jersey residents," **said Acting Governor Way**. "This legislation will ensure that, during the hot summer months, residents can keep their air conditioning and water running. The Summer Termination Program is one of the many steps our Administration is taking to bolster public health and ensure hardworking New Jerseyans are not forced to endure dangerous heat indoors as climate change continues to exacerbate temperatures in the summer months."

"The Summer Termination Program provides an important additional tool in our toolbox to help ensure New Jersey residents maintain access to essential utility services that support their well-being and quality of life," **said Christine Guhl-Sadovy, President of the NJBPU**.

"We recognize the financial challenges that people sometimes face as they balance costs for housing, food, and medication, among other needs, with their utility bills," **said DCA Commissioner Jacquelyn A. Suárez**. "By preventing utility shutoffs during the hottest time of the year, the new Summer Termination Program will support public health and safety while giving people time to make deferred payment arrangements or apply for utility assistance. At DCA, we are committed to helping families who are financially struggling get through heat waves without compromising the health of their loved ones and themselves."

Under the new law, electricity, water, and sewer service will not be terminated during the June 15 to August 31 protection period for residential customers who demonstrate that they meet the existing eligibility criteria for the [Winter Termination Program \(https://www.nj.gov/dca/dhcr/offices/wintertermination.shtml\)](https://www.nj.gov/dca/dhcr/offices/wintertermination.shtml), or who otherwise demonstrate an inability to pay their utility bills due to circumstances beyond their control.


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The establishment of the Summer Termination Program builds upon the Murphy Administration's ongoing efforts to aid New Jerseyans impacted by the energy cost crisis caused by mismanagement under regional grid operator PJM. Other notable efforts to combat rising energy costs include:

- Calling for a formal investigation (<https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562025/approved/20250417a.shtml>) into the energy cost crisis facilitated by PJM
- Announcing \$430 million in direct economic relief (<https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562025/approved/20250605a.shtml>) for New Jersey ratepayers
- Sending a bipartisan letter (<https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562025/approved/20250718a.shtml>) to PJM demanding increased transparency and oversight
- Signing legislation (<https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562025/approved/20250815a.shtml>) to increase public accountability from grid operators
- Expanding clean energy and energy storage capacity (<https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562025/approved/20250822a.shtml>)

The prime sponsors of A5563/S4361 are Senators Raj Mukherji and Nilsa Cruz-Perez and Assemblymembers Eliana Pintor Marin, Reginald Atkins, Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, and Annette Quijano.

"As electricity costs spiked this summer, it became painfully clear that families already struggling to make ends meet need relief. In extreme temperatures, power shutoffs are not just a financial hardship – they're a threat to health and safety, particularly for children, seniors, people with chronic conditions, and those living in poorly insulated homes," **said Senator Raj Mukherji**. "Electricity for cooling is not a luxury in scorching conditions; it's a lifeline. This law ensures utilities stay on during the hottest months, protecting vulnerable New Jerseyans and saving lives."

"The Summer Termination Program will help ensure safety during times of extreme heat for residents who are unable to pay due to situations outside of their control, just as the Winter Termination Program ensures safety during cold weather," **said Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez**. "This program both recognizes the danger posed by extreme heat, especially for vulnerable populations such as the elderly, and that putting someone's health at risk for being unable to pay a utility bill threatens to further compound the hardships preventing payment in the first place."

"The Summer Termination Program makes sure essential utilities remain on when families need them most," **said Assemblywoman Pintor Marin**. "This policy is a vital safeguard for public health and community stability. It reflects our commitment to protecting working families and strengthening resilience in the face of extreme heat."

"This bill is about leveling the playing field, giving vulnerable residents the same stability and security that every New Jersey family deserves," **said Assemblyman Reginald Atkins**. "No individual with chronic health issues should suffer due to their socio-economic status. I'm proud to see legislation creating a Summer Termination Program signed into law, safeguarding low-income households from the harsh consequences of utility shutoffs during the hottest months of the year."

"The Summer Termination Program is part of a vision for a New Jersey where no one's health or safety is put at risk because of financial hardship in the heat of summer," **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson**. "This legislation protects vulnerable New Jerseyans during the hot summer months while laying the groundwork for more resilient and stronger communities as extreme weather becomes more frequent."

"Working families are already stretched thin—this bill is an important way we can help make sure they are able to

keep their lights on and their homes cooled in the summer," **said Assemblywoman Annette Quijano**. "By ensuring uninterrupted utility service in the summer, we're protecting them from costly reconnections and helping keep more money in their pockets where it belongs."

"The mental, physical and emotional toll taken on families experiencing financial hardships is quite extensive," **said Marcus Sibley, Chair of the NJ Progressive Equitable Energy Coalition**. "Couple that with losing access to needed utilities during that same timeframe, and you have a recipe for a mental health crisis that will most likely outlive the financial crisis. NJPEEC applauds our legislature for the establishment of the Summer Termination Program, as it was both the good thing and the right thing for our state to do."

"As heat waves grow longer and more frequent, older adults and those with critical health needs face serious risks. No one should ever have to choose between keeping their home cool and affording other basic necessities. AARP New Jersey applauds Governor Murphy and bill sponsors Assemblymembers Eliana Pintor Marin, Reginald Atkins, Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, and Annette Quijano, along with Senators Raj Mukherji and Nilsa Cruz-Perez, for their leadership in advancing this commonsense law to expand protections against summer utility shutoffs," **said Chris Widelo, AARP NJ State Director**.

"The Summer Termination Program is a critical step to put people before profits and ensure that no household is forced to choose between paying the bills and staying safe. This bill is about protecting New Jersey families from the dangerous and unaffordable consequences of extreme heat, which will only get worse due to climate change," **said Ed Potosnak, Executive Director, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters**. "Solar is the cheapest source of electricity. Until we secure a 100% clean energy future, families will be left paying the price for volatile fossil fuel prices and the impacts of climate change. We thank the Governor and legislature for protecting families today, and we look forward to working for permanent solutions to lower costs, combat climate change, and prevent deadly shut offs during heat waves."

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