



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0236-2004, **Version:** *

Res. No. 236

Resolution supporting enactment of New York State Assembly Bill A.4297-B, a bill to amend the Public Service Law and Public Authorities Law in relation to the duties of public utilities in maintaining safe and efficient equipment.

By Council Members Lopez, Baez, Barron, Clarke, Gerson, Nelson, Sears and Vallone

Whereas, Assembly bill A.4297-B, the “Public Utility Reliability and Safety Inspections Act of 2004”, will require electric corporations, gas corporations, municipally-operated utilities, the New York State Power Authority and the Long Island Power Authority to promulgate and implement written guidelines and procedures for the inspection of each category of its equipment, such as transformers, switching and protective devices, regulators and capacitors, overhead and underground cables and conductors, and wooden poles; and

Whereas, Assembly bill A.4297-B also creates a schedule for the inspection of that equipment, with visual inspections being required on a yearly basis in urban areas and detailed inspections required on a triennial basis; New York City residents have endured blackouts in 1965, 1977 and 2003; and

Whereas, Those service providers would also be required to report on an annual basis detailed descriptions of the death or injury suffered by persons in circumstances related to the operation of their equipment, fires or explosions that disrupted service or caused harm to persons or property, equipment malfunctions that did or could have adversely affected the provision of service; and

Whereas, Those service providers would also be required to investigate such events within thirty days of obtaining information making them aware of the occurrence; and

Whereas, The Public Service Commission would be required to prepare an annual report on the frequency of service disruptions and whether any customer groups, based on geographic areas, are

disproportionately affected by those disruptions and transmit that report to the Governor, Speaker of the Assembly and Temporary President of the Senate ; and

Whereas, There have been numerous incidents of below ground explosions and fires in electrical equipment, most recently on March 16, 2004 in the East Village, in which a firefighter was injured in the ensuing effort to extinguish that fire; and

Whereas, The January 2004 death of Jodie Lane, who was electrocuted because of a voltage leakage in a Con Edison utility box, and other incidents occurring around that time raised concerns about the affect of utility maintenance and repair procedures on the health and safety of New York City residents; and

Whereas, Assemblyman Paul Tonko, Chair of the New York State Assembly Energy Committee stated, in a New York State Assembly press release dated February 9, 2004, that since deregulation, electric utilities have slashed their workforce levels and have reduced the level of investment in maintaining distribution systems; and

Whereas, Assurance is needed of the continued reliable and safe operation of the electric system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports enactment of Assembly bill A.4297-B, a bill to amend the Public Service Law and Public Authorities Law in relation to the duties of public utilities in maintaining safe and efficient equipment.

MA/JH
3/24/04 12:00 pm