



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 372-A

By The Speaker (Council Member Adams) and Council Members Yeger, Louis, Nurse, Krishnan, Narcisse, Abreu, Restler, Ossé, De La Rosa, Dinowitz, Williams, Avilés, Lee, Gennaro and Brooks-Powers (by request of the Manhattan Borough President)

A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to the creation of an office of the utility advocate

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Chapter 1 of the charter of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 20-n to read as follows:

§ 20-n. Office of the utility advocate. a. For the purposes of this section, the term “utility” means a provider of electric, gas, or steam service in the city.

b. The mayor shall establish an office of the utility advocate. Such office may be established within any office of the mayor or as a separate office of any department the head of which is appointed by the mayor. Such office shall be headed by an individual who shall be appointed by the mayor or, if the office is established within an agency other than the office of the mayor, by the head of such agency. Such office shall:

1. Establish a website, email address and telephone number to receive communications from utility customers on their utility services;

2. Advocate on behalf of utility customers by providing testimony for public hearings. Such public hearings shall include, but need not be limited to, rate cases conducted by the public service commission;

3. Conduct outreach and provide educational materials to the public on choosing, starting and stopping utility services; methods to lower the cost of their utility bills; and utility complaint procedures; and

4. Assist consumers with accessing and navigating financial aid available to cover utility costs.

c. In performing the duties of the office, the director shall regularly consult with 311; the department of social services; the office of financial empowerment at the department of consumer and worker protection; the mayor's office of long-term planning and sustainability, or its successor office or agency; and any other agency or office the director deems necessary to further the duties of the office.

§ 2. This local law takes effect on September 1, 2023, except that the mayor shall take such measures as are necessary for the implementation of this local law, before such date.

SJ/DSS

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