

HOUSE BILL NO. 120

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Labor and Commerce

on _____)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Keys-Gamarra)

A BILL to direct the Consumer Services Section within the State Corporation Commission's Division of Public Utility Regulation to serve as a public utility ombudsman.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *The Consumer Services Section (the Section) within the State Corporation Commission's (the Commission) Division of Public Utility Regulation shall serve as a public utility ombudsman. In addition to the Section's other duties, the Section's duties shall include, or continue to include, the following: (i) receive, review, and attempt to resolve any complaints from residential customers regarding public utilities; (ii) assist residential customers in understanding their rights and responsibilities under the terms of any agreement with a public utility; (iii) assist residential customers who are facing a cessation of service due to the dissolution of a public utility; (iv) maintain data on inquiries received, the types of assistance requested, any actions taken, and the disposition of such matters; (v) assist residential customers in using the procedures and processes available to them through their public utility or assistance available from the Commission; and (vi) provide procedural and technical information to residential customers, or an association of such customers, who are facing a potential investigation or enforcement action initiated by the Commission or Commission staff. All such assistance and services shall be provided to the extent feasible and be consistent with the Commission's legal authority and its rules of practice and procedure. All state agencies shall, upon request, assist and cooperate with the Section in the performance of its duties under this act.*