

STATE SENATOR • JIM BARCIA • 31ST DISTRICT

Barcia Press Release

P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • 517-373-1777 • Fax: 517-373-5871
E-mail: senjbarcia@senate.michigan.gov • www.senate.mi.gov/barcia



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct 8, 2009

Contact: Sen Jim Barcia
Phone: (517) 373-1777

Senate Passes Barcia Bill to Protect Consumers from Utility Shutoffs

New legislative package would regulate utility shutoffs, advocate for consumer safety

LANSING- State Senator Jim Barcia (D-Bay City) today helped passed Senate Bill 535, which he authored, that will help regulate municipal utilities to avoid utility shutoffs. This legislation will ensure all Michigan residents are protected from utility shutoffs regardless of their utility company.

"We cannot leave our most vulnerable citizens out in the cold," said Barcia, who sponsored a bill in the package. "With heating costs rising and families across the state struggling to make ends meet, we need to make sure every utility company in Michigan has policies in tact to protect our consumers during the coldest months of the year."

This bill is part of a comprehensive package of legislation to protect Michigan residents from utility shutoffs. The five bills that passed today will allow the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) to regulate municipal utilities throughout Michigan concerning low-income customers who are in risk of a shutoff. Barcia's bill codifies into law for municipal utilities what is already current law for regulated utilities to level the playing field for all utility customers.

This legislative package was introduced to prevent tragedies like the one in Senator Barcia's district last January. Bay City resident Marvin Schur, a 93-year-old World War II veteran, was found frozen to death in his home last winter after Bay City Electric Light and Power, a municipal utility not subject to MPSC rules, placed an electric limiter on his home.

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