



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Neil D. Breslin

## NYS Public Service Commission Announces Home Heating Regulations

NEIL D. BRESLIN November 15, 2010

November 15, 2010

**(Albany, NY)-** During these tough economic times home heating costs can present a significant financial burden to many New York families. Often many of our most vulnerable citizens are faced with the unfortunate reality of getting their service terminated due to their inability to make timely payments. The NYS Public Service Commission and Senator Neil Breslin (D-Delmar) would like to remind New Yorkers that consumer protection measures are available.

Between November 1st and April 15th 2011, if a utility user cannot afford to pay his or her bill and the weather is determined to be extremely severe by the Commission, the utility company is prohibited from turning off the heat. "During these difficult economic times many families are struggling to make ends meet. These consumer protection programs will help make sure families are not in any danger during the winter months" said Senator Breslin.

Additionally at all times, the utility company is required to notify the customer or adult at the residence at least 72 hours before service is terminated, including making a personal visit

to the residence, if necessary. Lastly, the service provider must notify the local department of social services if a resident is likely to suffer a serious impairment to health or safety if service is terminated.

All customers experiencing difficulty in paying their utility bills must be offered a budget plan to balance payments throughout the year. Heat and electricity providers will also refer payment troubled customers to payment assistance programs such as the federally funded Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). HEAP provides benefits to low-income households that cannot afford their heating bill or heating equipment.

For more information on HEAP, visit: <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap>

For a copy of these consumer protections visit the Commission's website: [www.askpsc.com](http://www.askpsc.com).

###