**Section 280.5 Policy**

The purpose of this Part is to ensure that essential utility services are provided to and maintained for the People of the State of Illinois under reasonable terms and conditions, and to establish fair and equitable procedures governing eligibility for service, deposits, billing, payments, refunds and disconnection for gas, electric, water and sanitary sewer utilities that take into account the duty of the utility, customer, applicant and occupant to demonstrate good faith and fair dealing. The policies and procedures outlined in this Part shall take precedence over any inconsistent utility tariff, unless the conflicting tariff provision has been specifically approved by the Commission as a waiver or exemption from this Part, and shall be viewed as the minimum standards applicable to gas, electric, water and sanitary sewer utilities. Utilities that are subject to this Part shall have the ability to expand or supplement the customer rights guaranteed by these provisions as long as those policies are applied in a nondiscriminatory manner. The "nondiscriminatory manner" requirement shall not be construed or interpreted to require a utility making an accommodation to a customer in a hardship situation to make that same accommodation for all customers facing a similar hardship.