

AN ACT in relation to energy.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
Good Samaritan Energy Plan Act.

Section 5. Definitions. In this Act:

"Department" means the Department of Commerce and  
Economic Opportunity.

"LIHEAP" means the energy assistance program established  
under the Energy Assistance Act of 1989.

Section 10. Legislative findings. The General Assembly  
finds that high electric and gas bill arrearages are a  
serious problem for low-income utility consumers in Illinois,  
often impeding access to service. The General Assembly also  
finds that the inability to have electric or gas service  
connected due to high arrearages is a threat to the health  
and safety of many low-income households in Illinois. The  
General Assembly further finds that eligibility for LIHEAP  
does not alleviate the burden of high arrearages for  
low-income utility consumers and is not enough to enable many  
households to have electric or gas service connected.

Section 15. Good Samaritan Energy Trust Fund. The Good  
Samaritan Energy Trust Fund is created as a special fund in  
the State treasury. The Department shall administer the Fund.  
The Department shall deposit moneys received from the  
following sources into the Fund:

(1) Voluntary donations from individuals,  
foundations, corporations, and other sources.

(2) Proceeds from fundraising events held for the

purpose of generating moneys for the Fund.

Section 20. Solicitation of contributions to Fund. The Department may insert a fundraising letter requesting voluntary contributions to the Fund in utility bills 2 times each year to solicit contributions to the Fund. All public utilities doing business in the State shall cooperate in allowing the Department to insert fundraising solicitation letters in their utility bills. The solicitation letter from the Department must be sized so as to fit into the utility's standard bill envelope, and must be of sufficiently light weight so as not to cause any increase in postage cost to the utility.

Section 25. Administration of Fund. The Department shall administer the Good Samaritan Energy Trust Fund with the advice and consent of the Low Income Energy Assistance Policy Advisory Council established under the Energy Assistance Act of 1989. Donations received for the Fund shall be made available for the purpose of alleviating utility bill arrearages for households determined eligible for LIHEAP, except that the Department may use up to 10% of the moneys donated for the Fund for the expenses of the Department and the local area agency incurred in administering the Fund. Resources from the Fund shall be awarded to local area agencies that have existing contracts with the Department to administer LIHEAP in Illinois.

Section 30. Distribution of moneys from Fund. Subject to appropriations made by the General Assembly, the Department may spend moneys from the Good Samaritan Energy Trust Fund for the purpose of providing assistance authorized under Section 25. The Department, with the advice and consent of the Low Income Energy Assistance Policy Advisory Council,

shall establish priorities for the distribution of moneys from the Good Samaritan Energy Trust Fund to low-income consumers to enable them to pay gas or electric bill arrearages in order to have household gas or electric utility service connected. Low-income consumers who are unable to have their service connected even with a LIHEAP grant shall be given preference. The Department shall ensure that moneys donated for the Fund (other than moneys used for administrative expenses as authorized in Section 25) are distributed to low-income consumers who reside in the county from which those moneys were received.

Section 35. Annual report. On or before May 31 of each year, beginning in 2005, the Department shall provide an annual report to the General Assembly on the use and effectiveness of the Good Samaritan Energy Trust Fund. The report shall include the amount of money deposited into the Fund, the amount of money allocated by the Fund for the direct benefit of low-income consumers, the number of low-income households served by the Fund, by county, and recommendations for improving the operation and effectiveness of the Fund.

Section 90. The State Finance Act is amended by adding Section 5.595 as follows:

(30 ILCS 105/5.595 new)

Sec. 5.595. The Good Samaritan Energy Trust Fund.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.