

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 153

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 16, 2022

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblyman BENJIE E. WIMBERLY

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Assemblyman WAYNE P. DEANGELO

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Umba, Assemblywomen N.Munoz and Speight

SYNOPSIS

Recognizes and honors critical energy and utility infrastructure workforce for service during COVID-19 pandemic and recent extreme weather events.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/5/2023)

1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** recognizing and honoring the critical
2 energy and utility infrastructure workforce for their service
3 during the COVID-19 pandemic and recent extreme weather
4 events.
5
6 **WHEREAS**, Among the individuals tasked with keeping the State safe
7 and functioning during the COVID-19 pandemic were those
8 employed in the critical energy and utility infrastructure workforce;
9 and
10 **WHEREAS**, The assets, systems, and networks, whether physical or
11 virtual, that comprise critical energy and utility infrastructure in
12 New Jersey are considered so vital to the State that their
13 incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on
14 public health and safety, security, and the economy; and
15 **WHEREAS**, With many residents sheltering in place during the
16 COVID-19 pandemic, residential water, gas, and energy
17 consumption increased; and
18 **WHEREAS**, Based on data obtained from the United States Energy
19 Information Administration, New Jersey's residential energy
20 consumption increased 11.8 percent from the second quarter of
21 2019 to the second quarter of 2020; and
22 **WHEREAS**, The increase in residential energy and utility consumption,
23 especially during non-traditional hours, placed an enormous strain
24 on existing energy and utility infrastructure and the critical
25 infrastructure workforce; and
26 **WHEREAS**, Through innovation, perseverance, and dedication, the
27 New Jersey critical energy and utility infrastructure workforce was
28 able to successfully stabilize increased residential utility service
29 demand, while also working to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by
30 following social distancing guidelines; and
31 **WHEREAS**, The already-challenging task of managing the
32 unprecedented demand in residential energy and utility service due
33 to the COVID-19 pandemic was further compounded by several
34 extreme weather events that occurred during 2020 and 2021; and
35 **WHEREAS**, July 2020 was the hottest month ever recorded in New
36 Jersey, causing spikes in electricity demand as New Jerseyans
37 sought to cool their homes; and
38 **WHEREAS**, The record-setting heat wave was immediately followed by
39 Tropical Storm Isaias on August 4, 2020, which left approximately
40 1.4 million households without power; and
41 **WHEREAS**, In the midst of the still-raging global COVID-19
42 pandemic, the critical energy and utility infrastructure workforce
43 across the State worked diligently to restore power to almost all
44 affected New Jersey customers within a week of the tropical storm;
45 and
46 **WHEREAS**, On September 1, 2021, the second-deadliest storm in New
47 Jersey's history, Tropical Storm Ida, ripped across the State,

1 leaving 30 New Jerseyans dead and causing billions of dollars in
2 property damage; and

3 **WHEREAS**, The critical energy and utility infrastructure workforce was
4 deployed around the clock in the wake of Tropical Storm Ida to
5 mitigate widespread flooding, restore power, and stop reported gas
6 leaks that could have led to further casualties and damage; and

7 **WHEREAS**, The dedicated, hardworking individuals that make up New
8 Jersey's critical energy and utility infrastructure workforce, through
9 their steadfast service during an unprecedented global pandemic
10 and several extreme weather events, have earned our highest
11 respect and deepest gratitude; and

12 **WHEREAS**, It is therefore fitting and proper to recognize and honor the
13 dedicated and invaluable service of the critical energy and utility
14 infrastructure workforce and their invaluable efforts to safeguard
15 this State's public health and safety, security, and economy during
16 the COVID-19 pandemic and recent extreme weather events; now,
17 therefore,

18

19 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
20 Jersey:

21

22 1. This House recognizes and honors the dedicated and
23 invaluable service provided by the critical energy and utility
24 infrastructure workforce of New Jersey during the COVID-19
25 pandemic and recent extreme weather events.

26

27 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of the
28 State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to
29 the Governor of this State and to every member of Congress elected
30 from this State.

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33 STATEMENT

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35 This resolution recognizes and honors the critical energy and
36 utility infrastructure workforce in New Jersey for their service
37 during the COVID-19 pandemic and recent extreme weather events.
38 According to data collected by the United States Energy
39 Information Administration, residential energy consumption in New
40 Jersey increased by 11.8 percent from the second quarter of 2019 to
41 the second quarter of 2020. These shifts in demand placed an
42 increased burden on the energy and utility companies that operate
43 within the State and their employees. Despite the challenges posed
44 by increasing residential utility demand during the global COVID-
45 19 pandemic, the critical energy and utility infrastructure workforce
46 rose to the challenge and was able to effectively stabilize residential
47 energy and utility demand in the State.

1 Further compounding the novel challenges posed by providing
2 energy and utilities during the COVID-19 pandemic were several
3 extreme weather events that occurred in the State within the last
4 two years. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, New
5 Jersey has experienced its hottest month on record, second deadliest
6 storm, and largest power outage since Superstorm Sandy in 2012.
7 In each case, energy and utility workers responded with dedication
8 and courage, oftentimes being dispatched into extreme weather, to
9 serve the emergent needs of the State.