

## CHAPTER 84

AN ACT concerning transition bonds and amending P.L.1999, c.23.

**BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Section 3 of P.L.1999, c.23 (C.48:3-51) is amended to read as follows:

C.48:3-51 Definitions relative to competition in the electric power and gas industries.

3. As used in this act:

"Assignee" means a person to which an electric public utility or another assignee assigns, sells or transfers, other than as security, all or a portion of its right to or interest in bondable transition property. Except as specifically provided in this act, an assignee shall not be subject to the public utility requirements of Title 48 or any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto;

"Basic gas supply service" means gas supply service that is provided to any customer that has not chosen an alternative gas supplier, whether or not the customer has received offers as to competitive supply options, including, but not limited to, any customer that cannot obtain such service for any reason, including non-payment for services. Basic gas supply service is not a competitive service and shall be fully regulated by the board;

"Basic generation service" means electric generation service that is provided, pursuant to section 9 of this act, to any customer that has not chosen an alternative electric power supplier, whether or not the customer has received offers as to competitive supply options, including, but not limited to, any customer that cannot obtain such service from an electric power supplier for any reason, including non-payment for services. Basic generation service is not a competitive service and shall be fully regulated by the board;

"Basic generation service transition costs" means the amount by which the payments by an electric public utility for the procurement of power for basic generation service and related ancillary and administrative costs exceeds the net revenues from the basic generation service charge established by the board pursuant to section 9 of P.L.1999, c.23 (C.48:3-57) during the transition period, together with interest on the balance at the board-approved rate, that is reflected in a deferred balance account approved by the board in an order addressing the electric public utility's unbundled rates, stranded costs, and restructuring filings pursuant to P.L.1999, c.23 (C.48:3-49 et al.). Basic generation service transition costs shall include, but are not limited to, costs of purchases from the spot market, bilateral contracts, contracts with non-utility generators, parting contracts with the purchaser of the electric public utility's divested generation assets, short-term advance purchases, and financial instruments such as hedging, forward contracts, and options. Basic generation service transition costs shall also include the payments by an electric public utility pursuant to a competitive procurement process for basic generation service supply during the transition period, and costs of any such process used to procure the basic generation service supply;

"Board" means the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities or any successor agency;

"Bondable stranded costs" means any stranded costs or basic generation service transition costs of an electric public utility approved by the board for recovery pursuant to the provisions of this act, together with, as approved by the board: (1) the cost of retiring existing debt or equity capital of the electric public utility, including accrued interest, premium and other fees, costs and charges relating thereto, with the proceeds of the financing of bondable transition property; (2) if requested by an electric public utility in its application for a bondable stranded costs rate order, federal, State and local tax liabilities associated with stranded costs recovery or basic generation service transition cost recovery or the transfer or financing of such property or both, including taxes, whose recovery period is modified by the effect of a stranded costs recovery order, a bondable stranded costs rate order or both; and (3) the costs incurred to issue, service or refinance transition bonds, including interest, acquisition or redemption premium, and other financing costs, whether paid upon issuance or over the life of the transition bonds, including, but not limited to, credit enhancements, service charges, overcollateralization, interest rate cap, swap or collar, yield maintenance, maturity guarantee or other hedging agreements, equity investments, operating costs and other related fees, costs and charges, or to assign, sell or otherwise transfer bondable transition property;

"Bondable stranded costs rate order" means one or more irrevocable written orders issued by the board pursuant to this act which determines the amount of bondable stranded costs and the

initial amount of transition bond charges authorized to be imposed to recover such bondable stranded costs, including the costs to be financed from the proceeds of the transition bonds, as well as on-going costs associated with servicing and credit enhancing the transition bonds, and provides the electric public utility specific authority to issue or cause to be issued, directly or indirectly, transition bonds through a financing entity and related matters as provided in this act, which order shall become effective immediately upon the written consent of the related electric public utility to such order as provided in this act;

"Bondable transition property" means the property consisting of the irrevocable right to charge, collect and receive, and be paid from collections of, transition bond charges in the amount necessary to provide for the full recovery of bondable stranded costs which are determined to be recoverable in a bondable stranded costs rate order, all rights of the related electric public utility under such bondable stranded costs rate order including, without limitation, all rights to obtain periodic adjustments of the related transition bond charges pursuant to subsection b. of section 15 of this act, and all revenues, collections, payments, money and proceeds arising under, or with respect to, all of the foregoing;

"Broker" means a duly licensed electric power supplier that assumes the contractual and legal responsibility for the sale of electric generation service, transmission or other services to end-use retail customers, but does not take title to any of the power sold, or a duly licensed gas supplier that assumes the contractual and legal obligation to provide gas supply service to end-use retail customers, but does not take title to the gas;

"Buydown" means an arrangement or arrangements involving the buyer and seller in a given power purchase contract and, in some cases third parties, for consideration to be given by the buyer in order to effectuate a reduction in the pricing, or the restructuring of other terms to reduce the overall cost of the power contract, for the remaining succeeding period of the purchased power arrangement or arrangements;

"Buyout" means an arrangement or arrangements involving the buyer and seller in a given power purchase contract and, in some cases third parties, for consideration to be given by the buyer in order to effectuate a termination of such power purchase contract;

"Class I renewable energy" means electric energy produced from solar technologies, photovoltaic technologies, wind energy, fuel cells, geothermal technologies, wave or tidal action, and methane gas from landfills or a biomass facility, provided that the biomass is cultivated and harvested in a sustainable manner;

"Class II renewable energy" means electric energy produced at a resource recovery facility or hydropower facility, provided that such facility is located where retail competition is permitted and provided further that the Commissioner of Environmental Protection has determined that such facility meets the highest environmental standards and minimizes any impacts to the environment and local communities;

"Competitive service" means any service offered by an electric public utility or a gas public utility that the board determines to be competitive pursuant to section 8 or section 10 of this act or that is not regulated by the board;

"Comprehensive resource analysis" means an analysis including, but not limited to, an assessment of existing market barriers to the implementation of energy efficiency and renewable technologies that are not or cannot be delivered to customers through a competitive marketplace;

"Customer" means any person that is an end user and is connected to any part of the transmission and distribution system within an electric public utility's service territory or a gas public utility's service territory within this State;

"Customer account service" means metering, billing, or such other administrative activity associated with maintaining a customer account;

"Demand side management" means the management of customer demand for energy service through the implementation of cost-effective energy efficiency technologies, including, but not limited to, installed conservation, load management and energy efficiency measures on and in the residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and governmental premises and facilities in this State;

"Electric generation service" means the provision of retail electric energy and capacity which is generated off-site from the location at which the consumption of such electric energy and

capacity is metered for retail billing purposes, including agreements and arrangements related thereto;

"Electric power generator" means an entity that proposes to construct, own, lease or operate, or currently owns, leases or operates, an electric power production facility that will sell or does sell at least 90 percent of its output, either directly or through a marketer, to a customer or customers located at sites that are not on or contiguous to the site on which the facility will be located or is located. The designation of an entity as an electric power generator for the purposes of this act shall not, in and of itself, affect the entity's status as an exempt wholesale generator under the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935, 15 U.S.C. s.79 et seq.;

"Electric power supplier" means a person or entity that is duly licensed pursuant to the provisions of this act to offer and to assume the contractual and legal responsibility to provide electric generation service to retail customers, and includes load serving entities, marketers and brokers that offer or provide electric generation service to retail customers. The term excludes an electric public utility that provides electric generation service only as a basic generation service pursuant to section 9 of this act;

"Electric public utility" means a public utility, as that term is defined in R.S.48:2-13, that transmits and distributes electricity to end users within this State;

"Electric related service" means a service that is directly related to the consumption of electricity by an end user, including, but not limited to, the installation of demand side management measures at the end user's premises, the maintenance, repair or replacement of appliances, lighting, motors or other energy-consuming devices at the end user's premises, and the provision of energy consumption measurement and billing services;

"Electronic signature" means an electronic sound, symbol or process, attached to, or logically associated with, a contract or other record, and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record;

"Energy agent" means a person that is duly registered pursuant to the provisions of this act, that arranges the sale of retail electricity or electric related services or retail gas supply or gas related services between government aggregators or private aggregators and electric power suppliers or gas suppliers, but does not take title to the electric or gas sold;

"Energy consumer" means a business or residential consumer of electric generation service or gas supply service located within the territorial jurisdiction of a government aggregator;

"Financing entity" means an electric public utility, a special purpose entity, or any other assignee of bondable transition property, which issues transition bonds. Except as specifically provided in this act, a financing entity which is not itself an electric public utility shall not be subject to the public utility requirements of Title 48 or any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto;

"Gas public utility" means a public utility, as that term is defined in R.S.48:2-13, that distributes gas to end users within this State;

"Gas related service" means a service that is directly related to the consumption of gas by an end user, including, but not limited to, the installation of demand side management measures at the end user's premises, the maintenance, repair or replacement of appliances or other energy-consuming devices at the end user's premises, and the provision of energy consumption measurement and billing services;

"Gas supplier" means a person that is duly licensed pursuant to the provisions of this act to offer and assume the contractual and legal obligation to provide gas supply service to retail customers, and includes, but is not limited to, marketers and brokers. A non-public utility affiliate of a public utility holding company may be a gas supplier, but a gas public utility or any subsidiary of a gas utility is not a gas supplier. In the event that a gas public utility is not part of a holding company legal structure, a related competitive business segment of that gas public utility may be a gas supplier, provided that related competitive business segment is structurally separated from the gas public utility, and provided that the interactions between the gas public utility and the related competitive business segment are subject to the affiliate relations standards adopted by the board pursuant to subsection k. of section 10 of this act;

"Gas supply service" means the provision to customers of the retail commodity of gas, but does not include any regulated distribution service;

"Government aggregator" means any government entity subject to the requirements of the "Local Public Contracts Law," P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-1 et seq.), the "Public School Contracts Law," N.J.S.18A:18A-1 et seq., or the "County College Contracts Law," P.L.1982, c.189 (C.18A:64A-25.1 et seq.), that enters into a written contract with a licensed electric power supplier or a licensed gas supplier for: (1) the provision of electric generation service, electric related service, gas supply service, or gas related service for its own use or the use of other government aggregators; or (2) if a municipal or county government, the provision of electric generation service or gas supply service on behalf of business or residential customers within its territorial jurisdiction;

"Government energy aggregation program" means a program and procedure pursuant to which a government aggregator enters into a written contract for the provision of electric generation service or gas supply service on behalf of business or residential customers within its territorial jurisdiction;

"Governmental entity" means any federal, state, municipal, local or other governmental department, commission, board, agency, court, authority or instrumentality having competent jurisdiction;

"Market transition charge" means a charge imposed pursuant to section 13 of this act by an electric public utility, at a level determined by the board, on the electric public utility customers for a limited duration transition period to recover stranded costs created as a result of the introduction of electric power supply competition pursuant to the provisions of this act;

"Marketer" means a duly licensed electric power supplier that takes title to electric energy and capacity, transmission and other services from electric power generators and other wholesale suppliers and then assumes contractual and legal obligation to provide electric generation service, and may include transmission and other services, to an end-use retail customer or customers, or a duly licensed gas supplier that takes title to gas and then assumes the contractual and legal obligation to provide gas supply service to an end-use customer or customers;

"Net proceeds" means proceeds less transaction and other related costs as determined by the board;

"Net revenues" means revenues less related expenses, including applicable taxes, as determined by the board;

"On-site generation facility" means a generation facility, and equipment and services appurtenant to electric sales by such facility to the end use customer located on the property or on property contiguous to the property on which the end user is located. An on-site generation facility shall not be considered a public utility. The property of the end use customer and the property on which the on-site generation facility is located shall be considered contiguous if they are geographically located next to each other, but may be otherwise separated by an easement, public thoroughfare, transportation or utility-owned right-of-way;

"Person" means an individual, partnership, corporation, association, trust, limited liability company, governmental entity or other legal entity;

"Private aggregator" means a non-government aggregator that is a duly-organized business or non-profit organization authorized to do business in this State that enters into a contract with a duly licensed electric power supplier for the purchase of electric energy and capacity, or with a duly licensed gas supplier for the purchase of gas supply service, on behalf of multiple end-use customers by combining the loads of those customers;

"Public utility holding company" means: (1) any company that, directly or indirectly, owns, controls, or holds with power to vote, ten percent or more of the outstanding voting securities of an electric public utility or a gas public utility or of a company which is a public utility holding company by virtue of this definition, unless the Securities and Exchange Commission, or its successor, by order declares such company not to be a public utility holding company under the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935, 15 U.S.C. s.79 et seq., or its successor; or (2) any person that the Securities and Exchange Commission, or its successor, determines, after notice and opportunity for hearing, directly or indirectly, to exercise, either alone or pursuant to an arrangement or understanding with one or more other persons, such a controlling influence over the management or policies of an electric public utility or a gas public utility or public utility holding company as to make it necessary or appropriate in the public interest or for the

protection of investors or consumers that such person be subject to the obligations, duties, and liabilities imposed in the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or its successor;

"Regulatory asset" means an asset recorded on the books of an electric public utility or gas public utility pursuant to the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards, No. 71, entitled "Accounting for the Effects of Certain Types of Regulation," or any successor standard and as deemed recoverable by the board;

"Related competitive business segment of an electric public utility or gas public utility" means any business venture of an electric public utility or gas public utility including, but not limited to, functionally separate business units, joint ventures, and partnerships, that offers to provide or provides competitive services;

"Related competitive business segment of a public utility holding company" means any business venture of a public utility holding company, including, but not limited to, functionally separate business units, joint ventures, and partnerships and subsidiaries, that offers to provide or provides competitive services, but does not include any related competitive business segments of an electric public utility or gas public utility;

"Resource recovery facility" means a solid waste facility constructed and operated for the incineration of solid waste for energy production and the recovery of metals and other materials for reuse;

"Restructuring related costs" means reasonably incurred costs directly related to the restructuring of the electric power industry, including the closure, sale, functional separation and divestiture of generation and other competitive utility assets by a public utility, or the provision of competitive services as such costs are determined by the board, and which are not stranded costs as defined in this act but may include, but not be limited to, investments in management information systems, and which shall include expenses related to employees affected by restructuring which result in efficiencies and which result in benefits to ratepayers, such as training or retraining at the level equivalent to one year's training at a vocational or technical school or county community college, the provision of severance pay of two weeks of base pay for each year of full-time employment, and a maximum of 24 months' continued health care coverage. Except as to expenses related to employees affected by restructuring, "restructuring related costs" shall not include going forward costs;

"Retail choice" means the ability of retail customers to shop for electric generation or gas supply service from electric power or gas suppliers, or opt to receive basic generation service or basic gas service, and the ability of an electric power or gas supplier to offer electric generation service or gas supply service to retail customers, consistent with the provisions of this act;

"Shopping credit" means an amount deducted from the bill of an electric public utility customer to reflect the fact that such customer has switched to an electric power supplier and no longer takes basic generation service from the electric public utility;

"Social program" means a program implemented with board approval to provide assistance to a group of disadvantaged customers, to provide protection to consumers, or to accomplish a particular societal goal, and includes, but is not limited to, the winter moratorium program, utility practices concerning "bad debt" customers, low income assistance, deferred payment plans, weatherization programs, and late payment and deposit policies, but does not include any demand side management program or any environmental requirements or controls;

"Societal benefits charge" means a charge imposed by an electric public utility, at a level determined by the board, pursuant to, and in accordance with, section 12 of this act;

"Stranded cost" means the amount by which the net cost of an electric public utility's electric generating assets or electric power purchase commitments, as determined by the board consistent with the provisions of this act, exceeds the market value of those assets or contractual commitments in a competitive supply marketplace and the costs of buydowns or buyouts of power purchase contracts;

"Stranded costs recovery order" means each order issued by the board in accordance with subsection c. of section 13 of this act which sets forth the amount of stranded costs, if any, the board has determined an electric public utility is eligible to recover and collect in accordance with the standards set forth in section 13 and the recovery mechanisms therefor;

"Transition bond charge" means a charge, expressed as an amount per kilowatt hour, that is authorized by and imposed on electric public utility ratepayers pursuant to a bondable stranded costs rate order, as modified at any time pursuant to the provisions of this act;

"Transition bonds" means bonds, notes, certificates of participation or beneficial interest or other evidences of indebtedness or ownership issued pursuant to an indenture, contract or other agreement of an electric public utility or a financing entity, the proceeds of which are used, directly or indirectly, to recover, finance or refinance bondable stranded costs and which are, directly or indirectly, secured by or payable from bondable transition property. References in this act to principal, interest, and acquisition or redemption premium with respect to transition bonds which are issued in the form of certificates of participation or beneficial interest or other evidences of ownership shall refer to the comparable payments on such securities;

"Transmission and distribution system" means, with respect to an electric public utility, any facility or equipment that is used for the transmission, distribution or delivery of electricity to the customers of the electric public utility including, but not limited to, the land, structures, meters, lines, switches and all other appurtenances thereof and thereto, owned or controlled by the electric public utility within this State;

"Transition period" means the period from August 1, 1999 through July 31, 2003; and

"Universal service" means any service approved by the board with the purpose of assisting low-income residential customers in obtaining or retaining electric generation or delivery service.

2. Section 14 of P.L.1999, c.23 (C.48:3-62) is amended to read as follows:

C.48:3-62 Authorization for issuance of transition bonds.

14. a. For purposes of recovering a portion of the stranded costs of an electric public utility that are deemed eligible for rate recovery in a stranded cost recovery order consistent with the provisions of section 13 of this act, and for compliance by the electric public utility with the rate reduction requirements determined by the board to be necessary and appropriate consistent with the provisions of sections 4 and 13 of this act, or for the purposes of recovering basic generation service transition costs of an electric public utility, the board may authorize the issuance of transition bonds by the electric public utility or other financing entity approved by the board. Such bonds shall be secured through an irrevocable bondable stranded cost rate order imposing a non-bypassable transition bond charge as provided in section 18 of this act and shall provide for collection of the transition bond charge by the electric public utility or another entity approved by the board. This transition bond charge shall be assessed in connection with the recovery of stranded costs pursuant to section 13 of this act or basic generation service transition costs pursuant to this section, but each electric public utility shall maintain separate accounting for transition bond charges so that the board can determine, at any time, the amount of each type of charge that has been assessed and collected by the electric public utility. The net proceeds of the transition bonds shall be used by or on behalf of the electric public utility solely for the purposes of reducing the amount of its otherwise recovery-eligible stranded costs, as determined by the board in accordance with the provisions of section 13 of this act, or reducing the amount of basic generation service transition costs through the refinancing or retirement of electric public utility debt or equity, or both, or the buyout, buydown or other restructuring of a power purchase agreement if such buyout, buydown or restructuring leads directly to substantial customer benefits over the term of the power purchase agreement. The entire amount of cost savings achieved as a result of the issuance of such transition bonds, whether as a result of a reduction in capital costs or a lengthened recovery period associated with otherwise recovery-eligible stranded costs or basic generation service transition costs or as a source of cash for the buyout, buydown or other restructuring of a power purchase agreement, shall be passed on to the customers of the electric public utility in the form of reduced rates or mitigated rate increases for electricity. Anything in this act or any other law to the contrary notwithstanding, except for adjustments authorized under paragraph (2) of subsection a. and subsection b. of section 15 of this act, transition bond charges approved by the board in a bondable stranded costs rate order shall not be offset, reduced, adjusted or otherwise diminished either directly or indirectly.

b. For the purposes of recovering stranded costs of an electric public utility, the issuance of transition bonds for an electric public utility may be authorized by the board if all the following findings are made by the board in connection with its review of a stranded cost filing made by an electric public utility pursuant to section 13 of this act:

(1) The electric public utility has taken reasonable measures to date, and has the appropriate incentives or plans in place to take reasonable measures, to mitigate the total amount of its stranded costs;

(2) The electric public utility will not be able to achieve the level of rate reduction deemed by the board to be necessary and appropriate pursuant to the provisions of sections 4 and 13 of this act absent the issuance of transition bonds;

(3) The issuance of such bonds will provide tangible and quantifiable benefits to ratepayers, including greater rate reductions than would have been achieved absent the issuance of such bonds and net present value savings over the term of the bonds; and

(4) The structuring and pricing of the transition bonds assure that the electric public utility's customers pay the lowest transition bond charges consistent with market conditions and the terms of the bondable stranded costs rate order. If so authorized in the financing order by the board, the structure and pricing of the transition bonds shall be conclusively deemed to satisfy this requirement if so certified by a designee of the board upon the pricing of the transition bonds, which certification will be final and uncontestable as of its date.

c. Subject to the other requirements of this section:

(1) The board may authorize the issuance of transition bonds for utility generation plant stranded costs determined by the board to be recoverable pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection a. of section 13 of this act in a principal amount of up to 75 percent of the total amount of the electric public utility's recovery-eligible utility generation plant stranded costs, as determined by the board in accordance with the provisions of section 13 of this act, or, in the event that an electric public utility divests itself of a majority of its generating assets, which divestiture will result in a lower market transition charge than that which would have been collected from customers had the electric public utility not divested such assets, and the utility has established, as determined by the board, the stranded cost amount with certainty attributable to its remaining generating asset or assets, the board may authorize the issuance of transition bonds in a principal amount up to the full stranded cost value of such remaining generating asset or assets based on the following criteria:

(a) The greater the level of aggregate rate reduction provided pursuant to subsections d. and e. of section 4 of this act, the higher the percentage of stranded costs for which transition bonds may be issued;

(b) The higher the degree of certainty, such as might be obtained by auction or sale of the assets, as to the magnitude of the electric public utility's actual stranded costs, the larger the magnitude of transition bonds which may be permitted; and

(c) Based on evidence on the record, such amount will produce substantial and quantifiable savings for the customers of that utility;

(2) The board may authorize the issuance of transition bonds for the buyout or buydown of long-term power purchase contracts with non-utility generators determined by the board to be recoverable pursuant to paragraph (3) of subsection a. of section 13 of this act, based on the following criteria:

(a) The greater the level of aggregate rate reduction provided pursuant to subsections d. and e. of section 4 of this act, the higher the percentage of stranded costs that may be securitized;

(b) The higher the degree of certainty as to the magnitude of the electric public utility's actual stranded costs, the larger the magnitude of transition bonds which may be permitted; and

(c) Based on evidence on the record, such amount will produce substantial and quantifiable savings for the customers of that electric public utility because the amount of the buyout or buydown payment is substantially less than the total projected stranded costs associated with the contract; and

(3) The board may authorize the issuance of transition bonds for the recovery of up to the full amount of an electric public utility's reasonably and prudently incurred basic generation

service transition costs based on the criteria that such amount will produce benefits for customers of the electric public utility which include the lowest transition bond charges consistent with market conditions and the terms of the bondable stranded costs rate order.

d. The board may approve transition bonds with scheduled amortization upon issuance of up to:

(1) Fifteen years if the electric public utility intends to utilize the proceeds from such transition bonds to reduce the stranded costs related to utility-owned generation;

(2) The remaining term of a power purchase agreement if the electric public utility intends to utilize the proceeds from such transition bonds solely for the purposes and requirements of paragraph (2) of subsection c. of this section; or

(3) Fifteen years if the electric public utility intends to utilize the proceeds from such transition bonds for the purpose of the recovery of basic generation service transition costs.

e. Transition bonds for the purpose and requirements of paragraph (1), (2) or (3) of subsection c. of this section may be issued in one or more series, in one or more offerings, and each such series may consist of one or more classes of transition bonds.

f. The board shall issue orders with respect to each electric public utility's amortization of stranded costs or basic generation service transition costs through the transition bond charges pursuant to this section.

g. For the purpose of recovering basic generation service transition costs, an electric public utility may make a filing in a form to be adopted by the board to request the board to authorize the issuance of transition bonds and to issue a bondable stranded cost rate order. The board shall review such filing, and after providing appropriate notice and an opportunity for hearing, may render a determination authorizing the issuance of transition bonds. If so authorized in the financing order by the board, the structure and pricing of the transition bonds shall be conclusively deemed to assure the lowest transition bond charges consistent with market conditions and the terms of the bondable stranded costs rate order when so certified by a designee of the board upon the pricing of the transition bonds, which certification will be final and uncontestable as of its date.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved September 9, 2002.