



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Secures \$100,000 Settlement with Pepco and Washington Gas Light *Settlement Compensates Lynnhill Condominiums Occupants Affected by Utility Terminations*

BALTIMORE, MD (September 12, 2017) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that his Consumer Protection Division (“CPD”) has reached a \$100,000 settlement with Potomac Electric Power Company (“Pepco”) and Washington Gas Light Company (“WGL”) concerning the termination of utility services to Lynnhill Condominiums in Temple Hills, Maryland on October 25, 2016. The settlement requires Pepco and WGL to pay \$100,000 to Lynnhill occupants affected by the October 25, 2016 service terminations and to assist Prince George’s County residents who need help paying their winter heating bills.

The Division alleged that Pepco and WGL gave occupants only one day’s notice before cutting the power and gas to all 219 units, rather than the legally-required 14 days’ individualized notice. Prince George’s County temporarily declared the property uninhabitable following the utility termination. Occupants were forced out of their homes with no time to adequately plan where to sleep that night or how to move their belongings. Some occupants went to hotels or stayed with friends or family. Others were forced into shelters. Some stayed at Lynnhill in the dark and without heat.

“The Lynnhill residents did not get fair warning before their utilities were cut off and they were forced onto the street,” said Attorney General Frosh. “The termination of heat and light made the apartments unsafe and caused real hardship for many of the residents. We hope that this settlement will help them recover from the troubles they endured.”

Within two days of the power being terminated, the CPD secured a temporary restraining order in Prince George’s County Circuit Court, giving occupants access to the property to retrieve their personal belongings. The next day, at the request of the CPD, the Maryland Public Service Commission ordered Pepco and WGL to restore electric and gas services to the building. The utilities began the reconnection process the next day and service has since been uninterrupted.

Following a hearing, the Public Service Commission held that the “Utilities’ failure to provide such proper notice compromised many of Lynnhill’s occupants, some of whom were elderly or had special medical needs, to pursue alternative housing and other options in a timely fashion, thus increasing risks that could have been mitigated by more comprehensively notifying Lynnhill and its occupants of the threat of termination of utility services.”

The Attorney General’s actions also uncovered statewide failures by Pepco and WGL in providing proper notice of termination to consumers. As a result, the utility companies have already refunded approximately \$1.4 million to consumers who received a defective notice and paid fees to have their utilities reconnected.

Residents that lived at Lynnhill on October 25, 2016, should contact the Consumer Protection Division, by calling (410) 576-6569 to discuss eligibility for compensation.

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked Assistant Attorneys General Lucy Cardwell, Max Brauer, and Richard Trumka Jr., and Chief Investigator Chris Waldt for their work on the case.