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...from the Illinois House of Representatives

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Flider's Bill to Protect Against Utility Shut Offs **During Blistering Summer Heat Clears Senate**

Lawmaker Partners with AARP to Pass Legislation Strengthening Consumer Protections

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Legislation drafted by state Rep. Bob Flider (D-Mount Zion) to increase protections for area consumers passed out of the Illinois Senate on Tuesday. House Bill 5086 prevents utility companies from shutting off electricity if the temperature is forecasted to reach 95 degrees or above.

“As the weather begins to heat up, it is important that we make sure consumers' utility services aren't shut off when they need them the most,” Flider said. “This bill will protect our most vulnerable citizens, especially senior citizens, from having their air conditioning and electricity shut off at the worst possible time.”

Currently, state law prevents utility companies from shutting off service during winter months. However, utilities can shut off electric or natural gas service if the outside temperature is predicted to be 32 degrees or above. Currently, there is no protection for customers from having their power shut off during hot summer months, potentially leaving many consumers without air conditioning or electricity to power fans.

Flider teamed up with AARP Illinois to pass House Bill 5086, which provides additional protections for consumers who are struggling to make ends meet. The legislation provides cooling disconnection protection to residential customers, for non-payment of bills, if the National Weather Service has forecasted the temperature to reach 95 degrees or above, on any day or for the following 24 hours. The proposal also prevents disconnection on any day preceding a holiday or weekend when the forecast indicates that a temperature of 95 degrees or above will be reached during the holiday or weekend. House Bill 5086 creates emergency protections for area consumers during extreme weather that does not remove utility customers' responsibility to pay their bills.

“Additional protections are needed to help customers struggling to afford their utility bills from finding themselves without electricity during severe weather,” Flider said. “The members of the Senate have now joined the House in passing legislation that will provide those added protections so consumers won't have to worry about having their electricity disconnected during the extreme summer heat.”

House Bill 5086 now heads back to the House for concurrence. For more information, please contact Flider's constituent service office at (217) 428-2708.

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