

§117. Reimbursement fund

1. Filing fees expense; reimbursements and payment for services. All money collected by the commission in the form of filing fees, expense reimbursements ordered by the commission or payment for services shall be deposited with the Treasurer of State in an account to be known as the Public Utilities Commission Reimbursement Fund. Services for which the commission receives payment include the reproduction and distribution of copies of commission decisions, agenda and dockets, photocopying and the use of facilities. This account is a continuous carrying account, with appropriate subaccounts, for reimbursement of commission expenses incurred in processing the associated matters or providing the associated services or facilities which generated the filing fee, expense reimbursement or payment. So much of the filing fee, expense reimbursement or payment as may be required by the commission is allocated for these purposes and for the refund of the unexpended portion of the filing fee.

[PL 1989, c. 159, §1 (AMD).]

2. State Controller's approval. All payments under this section shall be made to the commission after approval of the State Controller. In no event may the payments exceed the amounts received by the Treasurer of State from the Public Utilities Commission. Upon certification by the administrative director of the commission that certain amounts in the Public Utilities Commission Reimbursement Fund are not required by the commission, the Treasurer of State shall transfer the amounts to the General Fund.

[PL 1987, c. 141, Pt. A, §6 (NEW).]

3. Administrative penalties. Except as provided in this subsection, all administrative penalties collected by the commission must be deposited into the Public Utilities Commission Reimbursement Fund.

A. The commission may use amounts collected as administrative penalties and deposited in the Public Utilities Commission Reimbursement Fund to reimburse the commission for additional expenses associated with the enforcement activities that resulted in the collection of the penalty. If the Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal undertakes an investigation of a gas explosion event pursuant to Title 25, section 2394, subsection 1 involving a gas utility or a natural gas pipeline utility subject to the jurisdiction of the commission, the commission, at the request of the State Fire Marshal, may reimburse the Office of the State Fire Marshal for its additional expenses associated with that investigation. [PL 2011, c. 27, §2 (AMD).]

B. After deducting any amount used pursuant to paragraph A, the commission may, to the extent practicable and in as equitable and fair a manner as possible, apply administrative penalties, along with any accrued interest, in accordance with this paragraph. The commission shall seek to apply the amount in a manner that benefits those customers affected or potentially affected by the violation, if they can reasonably be identified or, if the commission determines this application of the amount to be impractical or unreasonable, in a manner that benefits the class or group of customers affected or potentially affected by the violation. In order to achieve the purposes of this paragraph, the commission may apply the funds:

- (1) In the form of a direct payment or credit to the customers or group or class of customers affected or potentially affected by the violation resulting in the administrative penalty;
- (2) To supplement a low-income assistance or outreach program that the commission determines would benefit customers affected or potentially affected by the violation resulting in the administrative penalty;
- (3) To supplement the conservation program fund established pursuant to section 10110, subsection 7;

- (4) To supplement the telecommunications education access fund established pursuant to section 7104-B;
- (5) To supplement any other program or fund that the commission determines would benefit customers affected or potentially affected by the violation; or
- (6) To supplement available funding sources for intervenor and participant funding pursuant to section 1310-A, subsection 2.

Amounts applied pursuant to this paragraph to supplement an existing program or fund may not result in a reduction in other funding provided for the program or fund unless the reduction is outside the commission's control and the commission finds that application of the penalty amount to the fund or program is the most appropriate use of the penalty and the net effect will be an increase in total funding available to the program or fund.

In any final order issued by the commission approving or denying the application of administrative penalties to benefit any person affected or potentially affected by the violation, the commission shall make specific findings of fact supporting the commission's decision, including findings supporting any amount the commission approves as well as findings supporting the commission's denial of amounts requested by any person. [PL 2023, c. 143, §§1-3 (AMD).]

[PL 2023, c. 143, §§1-3 (AMD).]

4. Budget approval. The commission shall submit its budget recommendations for the Public Utilities Commission Reimbursement Fund as part of the unified current services budget legislation in accordance with Title 5, sections 1663 to 1666.

[PL 1997, c. 424, Pt. B, §6 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 141, §A6 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 159, §1 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 424, §B6 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 505, §13 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 432, §1 (AMD). RR 2009, c. 2, §98 (COR). PL 2011, c. 27, §2 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 143, §§1-3 (AMD).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the First Regular and First Special Session of the 131st Maine Legislature and is current through November 1, 2023. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.