**§1702-A. Evaluation of needs and resources**

**1. Definitions.**  As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Low-income consumers" means residential consumers for whom paying public utility bills is difficult or impossible without some form of assistance or government aid; [PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

B. "Residential consumers" means consumers who take public utility service for domestic purposes; and [PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

C. "Small business consumers" means commercial consumers that employ fewer than 100 employees. [PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

**2. Intent.**  It is the intent of the Legislature that the resources of the Public Advocate be devoted to the maximum extent possible to ensuring adequate representation of the interests of those consumers whose interests would otherwise be inadequately represented in matters within the jurisdiction of the commission.

[PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

**3. Priority.**  When the interests of consumers differ, the Public Advocate shall give priority to representing the interests of consumers in the following order:

A. Low-income consumers; [PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

B. Residential consumers; [PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

C. Small business consumers; and [PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

D. Other consumers whose interests the Public Advocate finds to be inadequately represented. [PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

This subsection does not require the Public Advocate to represent the interests of a consumer or group of consumers if the Public Advocate determines that such representation is adverse to the overall interests of the using and consuming public.

[PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1997, c. 166, §1 (NEW).

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 Second Regular Session of the 131st Maine Legislature and is current through January 1, 2025
 . 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.