



THE STORY OF HOUSE BILL 903

April 2007

After a Concord-area heating oil company abruptly shut down and declared bankruptcy, hundreds of customers with pre-paid contracts for winter oil delivery lost money.

May 2007

Following publicity about stranded customers, a state senator, in cooperation with the Consumer Protection Division of the Attorney General's Office, came up with proposed legislation that would require heating oil companies to include in contracts an explanation of how they plan to meet their obligations to prepaid customers.

In the Senate

It is too late in the session to introduce a new bill, so the fuel oil customer protection proposal is added, in the form of an amendment, to House Bill 903. That bill was about fuel storage tank regulation and it had already been approved and sent to a Senate committee.

Public Hearing

Senators hear from oil dealers and consumers. The Senate committee approves a version of the bill and sends it to the full Senate for a vote. With the agreement of the sponsor, further changes are made in the bill before the Senate votes.

May 31

The Senate approves the amended bill.

June 13

The House receives the bill, but does not agree with it and asks for a conference committee.

June 14

Senate and House members are appointed to a Conference Committee at which further changes are made.

June 27

Both the House and Senate adopt the Conference Committee report and the final version of the bill is sent to the Governor.

July 18

The Governor signs the bill into law.