

SUBJECT: Increasing the criminal penalty for damaging public power supply

COMMITTEE: Criminal Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Moody, Cook, Bhojani, Bowers, Darby, Harrison, Leach, C. Morales
0 nays
1 absent — Schatzline

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mark Bell, Association of Electric Companies of Texas; Jeff Bonham, CenterPoint Energy, Inc.; M Paige Williams, Dallas County Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot; James Parnell, Dallas Police Association; David Batton, Harris County Deputies Organization FOP 39; Sarah Floerke, Lower Colorado River Authority; Stan Southers, Oncor; Christopher Lutton, San Antonio Police Department; John Wilkerson, Texas Municipal Police Association; AJ Louderback, Texas Sheriffs Regional Alliance; Linda Durnin)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Journey Sais)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that increasing the criminal penalties for attacking public power supplies may deter individuals from committing such an offense.

DIGEST: HB 1833 would increase the penalty for impairing or interrupting a property used for power supply or causing a public power supply to be diverted. The penalty would increase from a state-jail felony (180 days to two years in a state jail and an optional fine of up to \$10,000) to a third-degree felony (two to 10 years in prison and an optional fine of up to \$10,000). The bill also would increase the maximum amount of a relevant pecuniary loss for the associated penalty from \$30,000 to \$150,000.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023 and would apply only to an offense committed on or after that date.

