

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.S.B. 614
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Business & Commerce
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Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

C.S.S.B. 614 requires local electric utility companies to charge and collect a \$0.50 surcharge per billing cycle to be deposited in a historical structure energy assistance fund. This fund will be used to provide assistance in increasing energy efficiency, promoting energy conservation, and assisting the owners of historic structures with electric bill payments to buildings recognized by the Texas Historical Commission in Section 442.001 (Definitions) of the Government Code. This bill is bracketed to Cameron County.

C.S.S.B. 614 amends current law relating to an electric utility surcharge to assist owners of certain historic structures with electric bill payments and to promote energy conservation and efficiency.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Public Utility Commission of Texas in SECTION 1 (Section 44.003, Utilities Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subtitle B, Title 2, Utilities Code, by adding Chapter 44, as follows:

CHAPTER 44. ENERGY ASSISTANCE FOR HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Sec. 44.001. DEFINITIONS. Defines "fund" and "historic structure" in this section.

Sec. 44.002. APPLICABILITY. Provides that this chapter applies only to a county that has a population of 400,000 or more, is adjacent to an international border, borders the Gulf of Mexico, and is in an area where customer choice has not been adopted.

Sec. 44.003. HISTORIC STRUCTURE ENERGY ASSISTANCE. (a) Provides that the historic structure energy assistance fund (fund) is an account in the general revenue fund administered by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC). Authorizes money in the account to be appropriated only for the purposes of a program created under Subsection (c). Requires that interest earned on the fund be credited to the fund.

(b) Requires PUC to adopt and enforce rules requiring electric utilities, municipally owned utilities, and electric cooperatives to establish a monthly surcharge in an amount of 50 cents per customer to finance the fund and remit the collected surcharges to the comptroller of public accounts for deposit to the credit of the fund.

(c) Requires PUC to establish a grant or loan or other assistance program designed to increase energy efficiency in historic structures, promote energy conservation in historic structures, and assist owners of historic structures with electric bill payments.

(d) Requires PUC by rule to establish application procedures and eligibility criteria for an owner of a historic structure in need of assistance with payment of electric bills or with energy conservation or energy efficiency measures.

(e) Authorizes PUC to use money from the fund to pay PUC's costs associated with establishing the program under Subsection (c), including costs of rulemaking and administering the program and fund.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.