

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2429  
By: Puente  
Natural Resources  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

High-efficiency commercial clothes washers have been on the market for years. The U.S. Department of Energy established new energy efficiency standards for *residential* clothes washers in 2001. However, DOE did not set water efficiency standards and, further, found that it had no authority to establish either energy- or water-efficiency standards for *commercial* clothes washers.

Recognizing the important savings potential in the commercial sector, states and localities (e.g., California, Maryland, Connecticut, and Seattle) have begun to establish their own energy- and water-efficiency standards for commercial machines. This bill establishes uniform efficiency standards for commercial clothes washers in Texas, thus achieving significant water and energy savings and ensuring that inefficient machines do not find harbor here as other markets are closed off to them.

This bill requires a minimum Modified Energy Factor of 1.26 cubic feet of washer capacity per kilowatt-hour per cycle – the same floor set by the DOE for residential machines to qualify for the Energy Star program. Efficient washers use as little as 40 percent less energy than standard machines. According to a Consortium for Energy Efficiency study of the multi-family and laundromat sectors and a City of Austin study on treatment and pumping costs, Texas could save approximately 1.5 to 3 million therms in natural gas and 45 to 55 million kilowatt hours of electricity each year if all commercial washers were converted to efficient machines through normal attrition rates.

This bill also sets a maximum Water Factor of 9.5 gallons of water per cubic feet of washer capacity per wash cycle – the same ceiling set by the aforementioned states and cities. Efficient washers use as little as half the water of standard machines.

In addition to conserving natural resources, protecting air quality and saving on water and energy costs, efficient washers help keep utility rates lower for consumers and keep costs down and bond ratings strong for cities by delaying the need for capital improvements to handle increased demand for water and energy.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2429 defines a commercial clothes washing machine as one designed for commercial use that has a capacity of not more than 3.5 cubic feet if it is a horizontal axis machine or not more than 4 cubic feet if it is a vertical axis machine. The bill prohibits the sale, distribution, lease or offer for use in the state of commercial clothes washers that do not meet the standards set forth in the bill. The bill requires commercial washers to meet certain water and energy saving performance standards (the water consumption factor may not exceed 9.5 gallons per cubic foot per cycle and the modified energy factor must be at least 1.26 cubic feet per kilowatt-hours per cycle). The commercial washers would also be listed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), as provided in the bill, on a list of machines certified to the TCEQ to meet the standards.

The TCEQ may include commercial clothes washers on the list that are certified by the Consortium for Energy Efficiency, Inc., as meeting the standards set forth in the bill. The agency may also test listed washers to determine the accuracy of the certification and shall remove any washers that do not meet this standard. The TCEQ may assess a reasonable fee to be deposited in the water resources management account for this inspection to determine the accuracy of the certification.

The commission shall, to the extent appropriate and practical, employ the standards established by the United States Department of Energy in determining or evaluating performance standards or testing procedures.

The bill excludes commercial clothes washing machines that are in the inventory of a retailer as of the effective date, or that have been ordered by a retailer on or before January 31, 2007.,

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

January 1, 2007.