

By: Deshotel

H.B. No. 563

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to disbursements from the Universal Service Fund.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 56.021, Utilities Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 56.021. UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND ESTABLISHED. The commission shall adopt and enforce rules requiring local exchange companies to establish a universal service fund to:

(1) assist telecommunications providers in providing basic local telecommunications service at reasonable rates in high cost rural areas;

(2) reimburse the telecommunications carrier that provides the statewide telecommunications relay access service under Subchapter D;

(3) finance the specialized telecommunications assistance program established under Subchapter E;

(4) reimburse the department, the Texas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the commission for costs incurred in implementing this chapter and Chapter 57;

(5) reimburse a telecommunications carrier providing lifeline service as provided by 47 C.F.R. Part 54, Subpart E, as amended;

(6) finance the implementation and administration of an integrated eligibility process created under Section 17.007 for

1 customer service discounts relating to telecommunications  
2 services, including outreach expenses the commission determines  
3 are reasonable and necessary;

4 (7) reimburse a designated provider under Subchapter  
5 F; ~~and~~

6 (8) reimburse a successor utility under Subchapter G;  
7 and

8 (9) finance the Texas Information and Referral Network  
9 under Section 531.0312, Government Code.

10 SECTION 2. Section 56.024, Utilities Code, is amended by  
11 amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsections (c), (d), and (e) to  
12 read as follows:

13 (b) A report or information is confidential and not subject  
14 to disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code, except as  
15 provided by Subsections (c) and (d) and rules adopted under those  
16 subsections.

17 (c) The commission by rule shall provide for public  
18 disclosure of information regarding a revenue requirement showing  
19 under Section 56.026. A revenue requirement showing is public  
20 information subject to Chapter 552, Government Code.

21 (d) The commission by rule shall require a  
22 telecommunications provider that receives a disbursement from the  
23 universal service fund to provide specific information regarding  
24 the expenditure of the disbursement. Information regarding the  
25 expenditure of money from the universal service fund is public  
26 information subject to Chapter 552, Government Code.

27 (e) The commission shall compile information regarding

1 revenue requirement showings under this chapter and expenditures of  
2 money from the universal service fund to facilitate public access  
3 to the information and understanding of the purposes of the  
4 expenditures.

5 SECTION 3. Section 56.026(a), Utilities Code, is amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (a) The commission by rule shall require a [A] revenue  
8 requirement showing [is not required] for a disbursement from the  
9 universal service fund under this subchapter.

10 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
11 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
12 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
13 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
14 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.