

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 79TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

March 24, 2005

TO: Honorable Phil King, Chair, House Committee on Regulated Industries

FROM: John S. O'Brien, Deputy Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB555 by Turner (Relating to safeguards for customers of retail public utilities in the electric power market.), **As Introduced**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would expand the customer rights and protections by establishing more generous disconnection prohibitions based on weather and providing additional mandates regarding due dates, payment plans, security deposits, credit scores or payment history, and treatment of payments by field service personnel. The bill would establish response times for transmission and distribution utilities to reconnect customers and mandate the reporting by retail electric providers (REPs) of information concerning the disconnection of customers and the public release of that information by the Public Utility Commission (PUC). Further, this would require that REPs offer low-income households electricity at a flat, reduced fee prescribed by the PUC.

This bill would require the Commission to make REP information available to customers, including all complaints against REPs and records relating to quality of customer service.

The PUC indicates it could absorb any costs associated with the bill within its current resources.

The bill would take effect immediately upon receiving a two-thirds majority vote in each house. If the bill does not receive a two-thirds majority vote in each house, the bill would take effect September 1, 2005.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to the 72 municipally-owned electric utilities is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 473 Public Utility Commission of Texas, 475 Office of Public Utility Counsel

LBB Staff: JOB, JRO, KJG, MW, RB