

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1783
By: Solomons
State Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, neither the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) nor the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) broadcast their meetings live or post audio archives online free of charge. A person can only gain access to this information by signing up and purchasing the service administered by TexasAdmin.com.

C.S.H.B. 1783 requires PUC and ERCOT to broadcast their hearings and open meetings online and without charge to the public.

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

C.S.H.B. 1783 amends the Utilities Code to require the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) to make publicly accessible, without charge, live Internet video of all its public hearings and meetings for viewing on its Internet website at <http://www.puc.state.tx.us>. The bill authorizes the PUC to recover the costs of administration by imposing an assessment against: a public utility; a corporation that sells electricity exclusively at wholesale and not to ultimate customers, that is authorized under state law on river authorities engaged in the distribution of sale of electric energy, and that acts on behalf of a river authority; a retail electric provider that serves more than 250,000 customers; or a power generation company that owns more than 5,000 megawatts of installed capacity in Texas.

C.S.H.B. 1783 requires the PUC to ensure that an independent organization certified by the PUC makes publicly accessible, without charge, live Internet video of all its public meetings for viewing from an Internet website.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 1783 adds a provision, not in the original, that authorizes the PUC to recover costs of administration by imposing an assessment against: a public utility; a corporation that sells electricity exclusively at wholesale and not to ultimate customers, that is authorized under state law on river authorities engaged in the distribution of sale of electric energy, and that acts on behalf of a river authority; a retail electric provider that serves more than 250,000 customers; or a power generation company that owns more than 5,000 megawatts of installed capacity in Texas.

C.S.H.B. 1783 differs from the original by making a technical correction, specifying that an independent organization is certified by PUC under Section 39.151, Utilities Code, rather than Section 39.1511, Utilities Code.

C.S.H.B. 1783 requires the PUC to ensure that an independent organization certified by the PUC makes publicly accessible, without charge, live Internet video of all its public meetings for viewing from an Internet website, rather than all public meetings and hearings as in the original. The substitute makes nonsubstantive changes.