

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1822  
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State Affairs  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Utility bills are complex and difficult for consumers to understand. However, certain elements -- taxes, transmission charges, distribution charges, and system benefit fund charges -- are common. Every retail entity should label these line items on the bill in a similar fashion and should base these labeled items on the same "definition" of the term.

H.B. 1822 amends the Utilities Code to require a certificated telecommunications utility, retail electric provider, or electric utility to use certain defined common terms on retail bills.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Public Utility Commission of Texas in SECTIONS 1, 3, and 5 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1822 amends the Utilities Code to require rules adopted and enforced by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) and relating to customer awareness to include a list of defined terms common to the telecommunications and electricity industries and require that applicable terms be labeled uniformly on each retail bill sent to a customer by a certificated telecommunications utility, retail electric provider, or electric utility to facilitate consumer understanding of relevant billing elements. The bill entitles all buyers of telecommunications and retail electric services to bills that use these defined terms. The bill authorizes a service provider, retail electric provider, or billing agent to submit charges for a new product or service to be billed on a customer's telephone or retail electric bill only if, in addition to other conditions that must be met, the service provider, retail electric provider, or billing agent uses defined terms on the bill as required by PUC rules.

H.B. 1822 requires the PUC to adopt rules relating to the list of defined terms on customer bills not later than December 1, 2009.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2009.