

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 81ST LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 4, 2009

TO: Honorable Troy Fraser, Chair, Senate Committee on Business & Commerce

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

IN RE: HB1783 by Solomons (Relating to the Internet broadcasting of Public Utility Commission of Texas and ERCOT public hearings and meetings.), **As Engrossed**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB1783, As Engrossed: an impact of \$0 through the biennium ending August 31, 2011.

This bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2010	\$0
2011	\$0
2012	\$0
2013	\$0
2014	\$0

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable Savings/(Cost) from <i>General Revenue Fund</i> 1	Probable Revenue Gain/ (Loss) from <i>General Revenue Fund</i> 1	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2009
2010	(\$236,735)	\$236,735	1.0
2011	(\$198,893)	\$198,893	1.0
2012	(\$211,704)	\$211,704	1.0
2013	(\$222,833)	\$222,833	1.0
2014	(\$235,317)	\$235,317	1.0

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would require the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to provide free access to internet video of the Commission public hearings and meetings on the PUC website. The bill would authorize the PUC to recover the costs of providing free webcasts of public hearings and meetings by imposing an assessment against a public utility, a corporation described in Section 32.053 of the Utilities Code, 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 this state.

The bill would also require the PUC to ensure ERCOT provides free access to internet video of their public hearings and meetings.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2009.

Methodology

The PUC currently provides webcasts of its open meetings through an agreement with a third party, TexasAdmin. However, this third party charges a fee to parties with an economic interest in the decisions of the Commission. Other interested parties are provided login and passcodes free of charge. Since this bill would require the PUC to provide live webcasting free of charge, the PUC would have to assume the costs of the live broadcasts of public hearings and meetings.

The agency has based costs estimates on the system currently in place and the DCS estimating tool provided by the Department of Information Resources. This includes \$51,919 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 and \$64,077 in FY 2011 for DCS hardware and software, \$50,000 in 2010 for non-DCS hardware, including cameras, routers, audio/video mixer, computer, and multi-cast switch, and \$60,000 each year for ongoing bandwidth. In addition, the agency estimates other operating costs of \$3,123 each year.

The agency estimates one additional FTE, a Network Specialist III, would be required to implement the provisions of the bill. Salary costs of \$55,762 and benefits costs of \$15,931 each year are included in total agency cost estimates.

This analysis assumes that revenues will be collected by the PUC sufficient to offset the costs associated with implementing the provisions of the bill.

Technology

The PUC estimates there would be technology impact of this bill since technology is the primary cost driver of the bill. The total projected technology cost each year would be as follows: \$161,919 for FY 2010; \$124,077 for FY 2011; \$136,888 for FY 2012; \$148,017 for FY 2013; and \$160,501 for FY 2014.

Local Government Impact

No fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 473 Public Utility Commission of Texas

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