

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2077
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Energy Resources
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Churches and other community-based organizations, often the last lifeline in the state's social safety net for many vulnerable Texans, are dependent upon the charitable giving of their members. Like Texas families and the state budget, charitable entities have suffered in this current economic recession. Given the possibility of massive cuts in the state's social services, houses of worship that are already feeling the economic difficulties of the recession will likely be called upon to assist those in dire need.

Utility bills are one of the largest line items in a church or community-based organization's budget because these organizations often operate out of large, old, and inefficient buildings. Energy efficiency measures on these buildings could lower utility bills, leaving savings for other operations. However, the organizations often lack the capital required to make such energy efficient investments. The loanstar revolving loan program funds projects that provide a long-term reduction in utility bills but is not available to private facilities. Allowing churches and community-based organizations to be included under the loanstar program could provide extra money to the charitable organizations for providing benefits to the communities they serve.

H.B. 2077 seeks to promote the use of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technology by nonprofit organizations by creating a pilot program to make certain nonprofit organizations eligible for loanstar revolving loan funds.

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

H.B. 2077 amends the Government Code to establish legislative findings relating to a pilot program to provide loans to community-based organizations and houses of worship for purposes of financing the implementation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technology in the buildings owned and operated by those organizations.

H.B. 2077 requires the state energy conservation office to establish, not later than March 1, 2012, and administer a pilot program under the loanstar revolving loan program to provide loans to houses of worship and community-based organizations to finance the implementation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technology in buildings owned or operated by those organizations. The bill requires the energy office to submit a report to the legislature, not later than January 1 of each year, that includes a brief description of the implementation and status of the pilot program; of the energy efficiency measures or renewable energy technologies financed under the pilot program; and of the energy saved and clean energy produced as a result of implementing energy efficiency measures or renewable energy technologies financed under the program. The bill requires the report to include recommendations for addressing any challenges or obstacles encountered in financing the implementation of energy efficiency

measures and renewable energy technologies under the pilot program and any additional information the energy office determines necessary.

H.B. 2077 provides for the meaning of "community-based organization" by reference to the Government Code and "renewable energy technology" by reference to the Utilities Code. The bill defines "energy efficiency," "house of worship," and "pilot program."

H.B. 2077 sets its provisions to expire December 31, 2015.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2011.