

By: Hegar

S.B. No. 712

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the administration of the universal service fund.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 56.021, Utilities Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 56.021. UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND ESTABLISHED. The commission shall adopt and enforce rules requiring local exchange companies to establish a universal service fund to:

(1) assist telecommunications providers in providing basic local telecommunications service at reasonable rates in high cost rural areas under two plans:

(A) the Texas High Cost Universal Service Plan (16 T.A.C. Section 26.403); and

(B) the Small and Rural Incumbent Local Exchange Company Universal Service Plan (16 T.A.C. Section 26.404);

(2) reimburse the telecommunications carrier that provides the statewide telecommunications relay access service under Subchapter D;

(3) finance the specialized telecommunications assistance program established under Subchapter E;

(4) reimburse the department, the Texas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the commission for costs incurred in implementing this chapter and Chapter 57;

(5) reimburse a telecommunications carrier providing

1 lifeline service as provided by 47 C.F.R. Part 54, Subpart E, as  
2 amended;

3           (6) finance the implementation and administration of  
4 an integrated eligibility process created under Section 17.007 for  
5 customer service discounts relating to telecommunications  
6 services, including outreach expenses the commission determines  
7 are reasonable and necessary;

8           (7) reimburse a designated provider under Subchapter  
9 F;

10           (8) reimburse a successor utility under Subchapter G;  
11 and

12           (9) finance the program established under Subchapter  
13 H.

14       SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
15 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
16 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
17 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
18 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.