

By: Carona, Davis

S.B. No. 1219

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to the Internet website operated by the Public Utility  
3 Commission of Texas to provide information regarding a customer's  
4 power to choose retail electric providers.

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

6 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that:

7 (1) a competitive electric services market requires  
8 timely, accurate, and adequate information about the products and  
9 services offered to consumers in the market; and

10 (2) the Public Utility Commission of Texas operates an  
11 Internet website regarding the power to choose retail electric  
12 providers on which offers by those providers are published.

13 SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 39, Utilities Code, is  
14 amended by adding Section 39.110 to read as follows:

15 Sec. 39.110. TEXAS ELECTRIC CHOICE WEBSITE. (a) The  
16 commission shall publish and maintain a website that allows  
17 customers to view competitive offers from retail electric  
18 providers. The website must enable a user to search by zip code  
19 offers available to a residential customer in the user's service  
20 area. Retail electric providers may, but are not required to, post  
21 offers available to residential customers on this website.

22 (b) At a minimum, the Internet website must include:

23 (1) features that make the website accessible to  
24 people with disabilities;

1           (2) a clear identification, with each price offer  
2 posted on the website, of the category of the product as defined by  
3 commission rules;

4           (3) a searchable and sortable database of each retail  
5 electric provider offer on the website that allows the information  
6 to be read into a commercially available electronic database; and

7           (4) information about each of the following programs  
8 available in the user's service area through a state agency,  
9 utility, or retail electric provider:

10           (A) energy efficiency programs, including  
11 weatherization and rebate programs;

12           (B) distributed renewable generation policies  
13 and programs, including rebate programs, net metering, and policies  
14 affecting consumers' rights; and

15           (C) low-income utility assistance programs,  
16 including bill payment assistance, weatherization, and rebate  
17 programs.

18           (c) The commission shall establish a project to implement  
19 this section. The commission shall create a working committee to  
20 provide input on the implementation of this section that is  
21 composed of members of commission staff, experts in user-centered  
22 web design, experts in consumer-choice web design, retail electric  
23 providers, consumer advocates, and representatives of various  
24 categories of potential users of the redesigned website, including  
25 people with disabilities and low-income customers.

26           (d) The commission shall establish protocols relating to  
27 the frequency with which information posted on the website is

1 updated.

2 (e) The commission shall consult and cooperate with other  
3 state agencies in the design, both for content and usability, of the  
4 website, including agencies providing low-income consumer  
5 assistance and energy efficiency assistance and the interagency  
6 coordinating group established under Section 535.053, Government  
7 Code.

8 SECTION 3. Section 39.116, Utilities Code, is amended to  
9 read as follows:

10 Sec. 39.116. NOTICE REGARDING CUSTOMER CHOICE INFORMATION.  
11 A retail electric provider shall include on each residential  
12 customer's bill a statement, in at least 12-point type on the front  
13 of the first page, that reads: "For more information about  
14 residential electric service please visit [www.powertochoose.com](http://www.powertochoose.com)."  
15 This section expires September 1, 2013 [~~2011~~].

16 SECTION 4. The Public Utility Commission of Texas shall  
17 publish and begin operation of a redesigned website as provided by  
18 Section 39.110, Utilities Code, as added by this Act, not later than  
19 September 1, 2012.

20 SECTION 5. The Public Utility Commission of Texas is  
21 authorized to accept funds from any source, including gifts,  
22 grants, or donations, for implementation of this Act. However, the  
23 commission may not incorporate a preference of information  
24 displayed directly or indirectly in favor of any funding source,  
25 and no entity will be required to contribute funds to have  
26 information posted on the site. Implementation of this Act is  
27 contingent on a finding by the commission that complete funding

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1 exists or is likely to exist to carry out the provisions of this  
2 Act.

3 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.