

1-1 By: Carona S.B. No. 1219
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 7, 2011; March 16, 2011, read
1-3 first time and referred to Committee on Business and Commerce;
1-4 April 18, 2011, reported adversely, with favorable Committee
1-5 Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 9, Nays 0; April 18, 2011,
1-6 sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.B. No. 1219 By: Carona

1-8 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-9 AN ACT

1-10 relating to the Internet website operated by the Public Utility
1-11 Commission of Texas to provide information regarding a customer's
1-12 power to choose retail electric providers.

1-13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-14 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that:

1-15 (1) a competitive electric services market requires
1-16 timely, accurate, and adequate information about the products and
1-17 services offered to consumers in the market; and

1-18 (2) the Public Utility Commission of Texas operates an
1-19 Internet website regarding the power to choose retail electric
1-20 providers on which offers by those providers are published.

1-21 SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 39, Utilities Code, is
1-22 amended by adding Section 39.110 to read as follows:

1-23 Sec. 39.110. TEXAS ELECTRIC CHOICE WEBSITE. (a) The
1-24 commission shall publish and maintain a website that allows
1-25 customers to view competitive offers from retail electric
1-26 providers. The website must enable a user to search by zip code
1-27 offers available to a residential customer in the user's service
1-28 area. Retail electric providers may, but are not required to, post
1-29 offers available to residential customers on this website.

1-30 (b) At a minimum, the Internet website must include:

1-31 (1) features that make the website accessible to
1-32 people with disabilities;

1-33 (2) a clear identification, with each price offer
1-34 posted on the website, of the category of the product as defined by
1-35 commission rules;

1-36 (3) a searchable and sortable database of each retail
1-37 electric provider offer on the website that allows the information
1-38 to be read into a commercially available electronic database; and

1-39 (4) information about each of the following programs
1-40 available in the user's service area through a state agency,
1-41 utility, or retail electric provider:

1-42 (A) energy efficiency programs, including
1-43 weatherization and rebate programs;

1-44 (B) distributed renewable generation policies
1-45 and programs, including rebate programs, net metering, and policies
1-46 affecting consumers' rights; and

1-47 (C) low-income utility assistance programs,
1-48 including bill payment assistance, weatherization, and rebate
1-49 programs.

1-50 (c) The commission shall establish a project to implement
1-51 this section. The commission shall create a working committee to
1-52 provide input on the implementation of this section that is
1-53 composed of members of commission staff, experts in user-centered
1-54 web design, experts in consumer-choice web design, retail electric
1-55 providers, consumer advocates, and representatives of various
1-56 categories of potential users of the redesigned website, including
1-57 people with disabilities and low-income customers.

1-58 (d) The commission shall establish protocols relating to
1-59 the frequency with which information posted on the website is
1-60 updated.

1-61 (e) The commission shall consult and cooperate with other
1-62 state agencies in the design, both for content and usability, of the
1-63 website, including agencies providing low-income consumer

2-1 assistance and energy efficiency assistance and the interagency
2-2 coordinating group established under Section 535.053, Government
2-3 Code.

2-4 SECTION 3. Section 39.116, Utilities Code, is amended to
2-5 read as follows:

2-6 Sec. 39.116. NOTICE REGARDING CUSTOMER CHOICE INFORMATION.
2-7 A retail electric provider shall include on each residential
2-8 customer's bill a statement, in at least 12-point type on the front
2-9 of the first page, that reads: "For more information about
2-10 residential electric service please visit www.powertochoose.com."
2-11 This section expires September 1, 2013 [~~2014~~].

2-12 SECTION 4. The Public Utility Commission of Texas shall
2-13 publish and begin operation of a redesigned website as provided by
2-14 Section 39.110, Utilities Code, as added by this Act, not later than
2-15 September 1, 2012.

2-16 SECTION 5. The Public Utility Commission of Texas is
2-17 authorized to accept funds from any source, including gifts,
2-18 grants, or donations, for implementation of this Act. However, the
2-19 commission may not incorporate a preference of information
2-20 displayed directly or indirectly in favor of any funding source,
2-21 and no entity will be required to contribute funds to have
2-22 information posted on the site. Implementation of this Act is
2-23 contingent on a finding by the commission that complete funding
2-24 exists or is likely to exist to carry out the provisions of this
2-25 Act.

2-26 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.

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