

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1488  
By: Harper-Brown  
State Affairs  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Gas utilities generally publish notices of rate increases in local newspapers. However, the gas utility may also mail the notice to or include it in the monthly bills of customers who reside in certain areas with a relatively low population. In recent years, there has been a growing number of customers in all areas, regardless of population, who pay bills and manage their accounts electronically and through the use of electronic communications. Interested parties point out that electronic communications could be used as another alternative method of informing gas utility customers of rate increases. H.B. 1488 seeks to authorize e-mail as an alternative method of delivering such a notice.

### **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. 1488 amends the Utilities Code, in a provision authorizing a gas utility to provide notice of a utility rate increase by mailing the notice to each directly affected customer or including the notice in the bill of each directly affected customer, as alternatives to publishing notice in a newspaper, removes the specification that those alternative methods of notice only apply to notice to the public in an area outside the affected municipality or in a municipality with a population of less than 2,500. The bill adds sending the notice by e-mail to each directly affected customer, if that address is available, to the other alternative methods of notice provided to each directly affected customer.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2013.