

By: Lucio

S.B. No. 1500

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to an electric utility surcharge to assist owners of certain historic structures with electric bill payments and to promote energy conservation and efficiency.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle B, Title 2, Utilities Code, is amended by adding Chapter 44 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 44. ENERGY ASSISTANCE FOR HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Sec. 44.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Fund" means the historic structure energy assistance fund.

(2) "Historic structure" has the meaning assigned by Section 442.001, Government Code.

Sec. 44.002. APPLICABILITY. This chapter applies only to a county that:

(1) has a population of 400,000 or more;

(2) is adjacent to an international border;

(3) borders the Gulf of Mexico; and

(4) is in an area where customer choice has not been adopted.

Sec. 44.003. HISTORIC STRUCTURE ENERGY ASSISTANCE. (a) The historic structure energy assistance fund is an account in the general revenue fund administered by the commission. Money in the account may be appropriated only for the purposes of a program

1 created under Subsection (c). Interest earned on the fund shall be
2 credited to the fund notwithstanding Section 404.071, Government
3 Code.

4 (b) The commission shall adopt and enforce rules requiring
5 electric utilities, municipally owned utilities, and electric
6 cooperatives to:

7 (1) establish a monthly surcharge in an amount of 50
8 cents per customer to finance the fund; and

9 (2) remit the collected surcharges to the comptroller
10 for deposit to the credit of the fund.

11 (c) The commission shall establish a grant or loan or other
12 assistance program designed to:

13 (1) increase energy efficiency in historic
14 structures;

15 (2) promote energy conservation in historic
16 structures; and

17 (3) assist owners of historic structures with electric
18 bill payments.

19 (d) The commission by rule shall establish application
20 procedures and eligibility criteria for an owner of a historic
21 structure in need of assistance with payment of electric bills or
22 with energy conservation or energy efficiency measures.

23 (e) The commission may use money from the fund to pay the
24 commission's costs associated with:

25 (1) establishing the program under Subsection (c),
26 including costs of rulemaking; and

27 (2) administering the program and fund.

1 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
2 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
3 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
4 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
5 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.