86R14048 GRM-D

By:  Walle H.B. No. 2224

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to public awareness of utility payment assistance programs and consumer rights during a disaster.

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

SECTION 1.  Subchapter A, Chapter 17, Utilities Code, is amended by adding Section 17.010 to read as follows:

Sec. 17.010.  DISASTER BILLING AWARENESS. (a) The commission in cooperation with the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the Railroad Commission of Texas shall:

(1)  promote public awareness of bill payment assistance available during a disaster for electric, gas, telecommunications, water, and wastewater services; and

(2)  provide the public with information about billing practices during a disaster to ensure that consumers of electric, gas, telecommunications, water, and wastewater services have an adequate understanding of their rights.

(b)  Customer awareness efforts by the commission must be conducted in English and Spanish and any other language as necessary to further the purposes of Subsection (a).

SECTION 2.  Not later than December 1, 2019, the Texas Division of Emergency Management, the Public Utility Commission of Texas, and the Railroad Commission of Texas shall begin the public awareness campaign required by Section 17.010, Utilities Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2019.