

By: Anchia

H.B. No. 4155

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to low income individuals who cannot afford to make
3 repairs and upgrades to appliances.

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

5 SECTION 1. Subtitle A, Title 3, Utilities Code, is amended
6 by adding Chapter 106 to read as follows:

7 CHAPTER 106. GAS CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

8 Sec. 106.0001. DEFINITION. In this chapter, "commission"
9 means the railroad commission.

10 Sec. 106.0002. GAS CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE ACCOUNT; FEE. (a)
11 The gas customer assistance account is an account in the general
12 revenue fund.

13 (b) Money in the account may be appropriated only to the
14 commission to provide funding for gas utility programs authorized
15 by Section 106.0003.

16 (c) Interest earned on the gas customer assistance account
17 shall be credited to the fund.

18 (d) The gas customer assistance account is financed by a fee
19 imposed by the commission on customers of gas distribution
20 utilities and deposited into the gas customer assistance account.
21 The fee may be a set amount or may be based on the volume of gas
22 purchased by customers.

23 (e) The commission shall set the amount of the fee by rule.

24 Sec. 106.0003. GAS CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. (a) A gas

1 utility may establish a customer assistance program to provide
2 grants to low-income customers of the utility for repairing or
3 upgrading gas appliances or gas pipes.

4 (b) The commission by rule shall adopt:

5 (1) criteria for a gas utility program to be eligible
6 to receive money from the gas customer assistance account; and

7 (2) procedures for providing money from the gas
8 customer assistance account to a participating gas utility.

9 (c) For the purposes of this section, "low-income customer"
10 means an individual in whose name gas utility service is billed who:

11 (1) is a member of a household with a total annual
12 income that is below 125 percent of the applicable income level
13 established by the federal poverty guidelines; or

14 (2) receives assistance from:

15 (A) the financial assistance program established
16 under Chapter 31, Human Resources Code;

17 (B) the medical assistance program under Chapter
18 32, Human Resources Code;

19 (C) the supplemental nutrition assistance
20 program established under Chapter 33, Human Resources Code;

21 (D) the federal special supplemental nutrition
22 program for women, infants, and children authorized by 42 U.S.C.
23 Section 1786; or

24 (E) the child health plan program under Chapter
25 62, Health and Safety Code.