By:  Campbell S.B. No. 1443

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to restoring electric service to certain vulnerable customers after a power outage and customer communication.

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

SECTION 1.  Subchapter D, Chapter 38, Utilities Code, is amended by adding Section 38.0725 to read as follows:

Sec. 38.0725.  PRIORITIES FOR POWER RESTORATION TO VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNICATION TO CUSTOMERS. (a) In this section, "vulnerable customer" means a customer:

(1)  who qualifies for critical care or chronic condition status as defined by the commission;

(2)  who is dependent upon an electric-powered medical device to sustain life;

(3)  that has a serious medical condition that requires an electric-powered medical device or electric heating or cooling to prevent impairment of a major life function through a significant deterioration or exacerbation of the person's medical condition;

(4)  who is the parent, guardian, or managing conservator of a child who qualifies for critical care or chronic condition status as defined by the commission;

(5)  who is the parent, guardian, or managing conservator of a child who is dependent upon an electric-powered medical device to sustain life; or

(6)  who is the parent, guardian or managing conservator of a child that has a serious medical condition that requires an electric-powered medical device or electric heating or cooling to prevent impairment of a major life function through a significant deterioration or exacerbation of the person's medical condition.

(b)  The commission by rule shall require each retail electric provider and electric cooperative that sells electricity to a customer to implement a registration process by which a new customer of that retail electric provider or electric cooperative may report to that retail electric provider or electric cooperative that the customer is a vulnerable customer.

(c)  A retail electric provider or electric cooperative that sells electricity to a customer shall maintain customer information reported under this section to allow that retail electric provider or electric cooperative to quickly identify vulnerable customers during a power outage and notify the relevant transmission and distribution utilities to prioritize those customers for power restoration.

(d)  The commission by rule shall require each retail electric provider and electric cooperative that sells electricity to a customer that chooses to implement a mass alert system to communicate to individual customers of potential emergency situations and power outages shall notify each of their customers of the existence of such mass alert system when:

(1)  the customer initially signs up to become a customer of the retail electric provider or electric cooperative; and

(2)  each time the retail electric provider or electric cooperative bills the customer.

SECTION 2.  As soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, the Public Utility Commission of Texas shall adopt the rules required by Section 38.0725, Utilities Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.