

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 and

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

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

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