

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 4556

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

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Hearing Date: April 20, 2021 8:00 AM

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Susan Gillette

Citizens' Climate Lobby, Lubbock chapter

Lubbock, TX

We are writing you today in support of HB 4556, before the House committee on State Affairs and the companion bill, SB 243 before the Senate committee on Business and Commerce. Both are scheduled for hearings at 8:00 AM, Tuesday, April 20, 2021.

These identical bills set new goals for efficiency, finding ways to do the same work with less energy. In balancing energy supply and demand, we often forget about efficiency, but the potential savings are significant and more than cost effective. We ask you to consider these reasons to support these bills.

First, energy efficiency saves consumers money and raises resilience in times of crisis. With the horrors of the February winter storms and blackouts fresh in our minds, we are all concerned about energy security under ERCOT. Will they be able to keep the electricity on when we are all running our air conditioning at full blast in a summer heat wave? Last week we even saw concerns about meeting electricity demands on a mild spring day. Whether the electricity goes out in hot or cold times, lives at stake. Properly insulated homes take longer to warm up or cool down which can greatly reduce suffering when the power does go out. Lower income populations suffer the most. The February winter storm cost Texas over 100 lives. A comparable electrical outage in the heat of summer would potentially take many more lives. Adding insulation, replacing leaky windows, upgrading inefficient lighting and old electricity guzzling appliances may not sound very important, but will put households at less risk if the electricity does go out.

Second, building energy efficiency is cost effective, not only for customers, but also utilities and the Texas economy. The average home can see a 25% reduction in their energy bills with proper energy efficiency measures. Start multiplying that by the number of homes that need the upgrades, and you will be seeing lots of megawatt hours. Lowering demand means less funding is needed for new energy generation and at the same time reduces risk of blackouts. Considering the damages from the February blackouts is in the \$100 billion plus range, we should be working hard to find ways to reduce demand and avoid this sort of disaster again.

Lastly, this is a great way for us to build jobs in Texas. There are more jobs in the energy efficiency sector than in the oil and gas industry. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Texas lost over 18,000 jobs in energy efficiency with the pandemic. Where else can we find that kind of job growth potential?

SB 243 and HB 4556 are identical bills, aimed at setting new efficiency standards. Texas first put energy efficiency resource standards in place in 1999, but they have not been updated since 2011. According to the Legislative Budget Board, adopting these bills would have minimal costs to the state, but many benefits for workers, utilities, consumers, and the economy as a whole.

Richard McKenzie

self, trader

Austin, TX

I am opposed to this bill. I am concerned that the mandate to "save energy" does not allow for growth of population or of industry within the territory of each utility. Texas is blessed with an abundance of energy, and we need to permit people to consume the energy they desire in order to lead comfortable and productive lives. We should not place arbitrary limits on the total amount of electrical power available. Please vote against this bill.

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