

By: Goodwin

H.B. No. 3939

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a study and report on transitioning to underground power lines.

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

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS. In this Act:

(1) "Commission" means the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

(2) "Study area" means areas of this state that experienced more than one power outage caused by a failure of overhead power lines during extreme weather events between January 1, 2018, and September 1, 2023.

SECTION 2. FINDINGS. The legislature finds that:

(1) underground power lines are more resistant than overhead power lines to extreme weather conditions and reduce the number of weather-related power outages; and

(2) the cost of burying power lines is significant and requires further analysis.

SECTION 3. STUDY. Using existing funds for research and development, the commission, in consultation with the Texas Division of Emergency Management, shall identify study areas and evaluate for those areas:

(1) the cost of burying existing overhead power lines;

(2) the cost of maintaining and repairing underground power lines;

1           (3) potential cost savings associated with reduced  
2 power outages;

3           (4) the effect of burying power lines on the  
4 environment, such as land use and water quality; and

5           (5) the effect of burying power lines on public safety  
6 and emergency response.

7           SECTION 4. REPORT. The commission shall submit a report of  
8 the results of the study and any recommendations to the governor,  
9 lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives  
10 not later than December 31, 2024.

11           SECTION 5. EXPIRATION DATE. This Act expires January 31,  
12 2025.

13           SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect September  
14 1, 2023.