**BILL ANALYSIS**

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| Senate Research Center | S.B. 1697 |
| 89R4662 SCR-D | By: Zaffirini |
|  | Business & Commerce |
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|  | As Filed |

**AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

As more homeowners seek to install rooftop solar systems, it has become increasingly important to ensure they have access to accurate and reliable information before making financial commitments. There have been growing concerns from constituents who have experienced misleading sales tactics, inadequate disclosures, and confusion regarding the financial implications of installing home solar systems. These issues have been particularly detrimental to elderly and low-income consumers, who may be persuaded to invest in oversized or overpriced solar panel systems under false promises of eliminating their electricity bills.

S.B. 1697 would direct the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) to develop and periodically update a best practice guide for consumers considering rooftop solar installations. This guide would cover key consumer questions on net metering, buyback programs, and incentives; technical factors like roof orientation, shading, and efficiency; financial aspects including financing, tax credits, and maintenance costs; and PUC contact information for regulatory guidance. S.B. 1697 also would require electric providers to share this guide with their customers and make it easily accessible online and through billing communications.

Overall, this bill would not impose new regulations on the solar industry but, instead, focus on consumer education and transparency.

As proposed, S.B. 1697 amends current law relating to a customer guide to home solar energy devices.

**RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

**SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 17, Utilities Code, by adding Section 17.011, as follows:

Sec. 17.011. TRANSPARENCY AND BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR ROOFTOP SOLAR SYSTEMS FOR HOMES. (a) Defines "solar energy device."

(b) Requires the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) to develop and periodically update a guide to provide customers with basic information, best practices, and guidelines to consider when deciding whether to install a solar energy device for a home and a list of resources for obtaining more detailed information on solar energy devices.

(c) Requires that the guide include the following information:

(1) suggested questions to ask the electric cooperative, electric utility, municipally owned utility, or retail electric provider that serves the customer about services relating to home solar energy devices, including whether the cooperative, utility, or provider offers certain services and can clearly identify the services related to home solar energy devices it does or does not provide;

(2) design elements of solar energy devices to consider for maximizing efficiency, including the condition, direction, orientation, and tilt of the roof on which the device is installed, shade analysis, square footage of the roof, and maintenance requirements;

(3) certain financial considerations for customers considering installing a solar energy device; and

(4) a contact telephone number and e-mail address for an employee or division of the PUC who can provide customers with information about solar energy devices in this state.

(d) Requires the PUC to publish the guide on the PUC's Internet website.

(e) Requires each electric utility that issues a bill directly to a customer for any electric product or service and each electric cooperative, municipally owned utility, and retail electric provider, for at least 12 months after the PUC publishes each version of the guide, to include a link to the guide on the utility's cooperative's, or provider's Internet website, and provide information about accessing the guide with each bill.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.