

By: Cook, et al.

S.B. No. 270

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a study of the costs and benefits of burying
distribution power lines in certain metropolitan areas.

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 areas" means the following regions:

(A) the Austin metropolitan area;

(B) the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex;

(C) the Houston metropolitan area; and

(D) the San Antonio metropolitan area.

SECTION 2. FINDINGS. The legislature finds that:

(1) during times of extreme weather, overhead
distribution power lines often take on significant damage;

(2) underground distribution power lines are more
resistant than overhead distribution power lines to extreme weather
conditions; and

(3) the cost of burying distribution power lines is
significant.

SECTION 3. STUDY. The commission shall evaluate in the
study areas each of the following for electric cooperatives,
investor-owned utilities, and municipally owned utilities:

(1) potential costs of burying existing overhead

1 distribution power lines, including costs that could be passed on
2 to ratepayers;

3 (2) potential costs of maintaining and repairing
4 underground distribution power lines;

5 (3) potential cost savings associated with reduced
6 power outages after burying distribution power lines; and

7 (4) anticipated effects of burying distribution power
8 lines on the environment, such as land use and water quality, on
9 public safety, and on emergency response.

10 SECTION 4. REPORT. The commission shall submit a report of
11 the results of the study and any recommendations to the governor,
12 lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives
13 not later than December 31, 2026.

14 SECTION 5. EXPIRATION DATE. This Act expires January 31,
15 2027.

16 SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect September
17 1, 2025.