

By: Schwertner

S.B. No. 1876

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the authority of the Public Utility Commission of Texas to retain assistance for regional proceedings affecting certain electric utilities and consumers.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 39, Utilities Code, is amended by adding Section 39.004 to read as follows:

Sec. 39.004. HIRING ASSISTANCE FOR REGIONAL PROCEEDINGS.

(a) The commission may retain any consultant, accountant, auditor, engineer, or attorney the commission considers necessary to represent the commission in a proceeding before a regional transmission organization, or before a court reviewing proceedings of a regional transmission organization, related to:

(1) the relationship of an electric utility to a power region, regional transmission organization, or independent system operator;

(2) the approval of an agreement among an electric utility and the electric utility's affiliates concerning the coordination of the operations of the electric utility and the electric utility's affiliates; or

(3) other matters related to an electric utility that may affect the ultimate rates paid by retail customers in this state.

(b) Assistance for which a consultant, accountant, auditor,

1 engineer, or attorney may be retained under Subsection (a) may
2 include:

- 3 (1) conducting a study;
- 4 (2) conducting an investigation;
- 5 (3) presenting evidence;
- 6 (4) advising the commission; or
- 7 (5) representing the commission.

8 (c) The electric utility that is the subject of the
9 proceeding shall pay timely the reasonable costs of the services of
10 a person retained under Subsection (a), as determined by the
11 commission. The total costs an electric utility is required to pay
12 under this subsection may not exceed \$1.5 million in a 12-month
13 period.

14 (d) The commission shall allow an electric utility to
15 recover both the total costs the electric utility paid under
16 Subsection (c) and the carrying charges for those costs through a
17 rider established annually to recover the costs paid and carrying
18 charges incurred during the preceding calendar year. The rider may
19 not be implemented before the rider is reviewed and approved by the
20 commission.

21 (e) The commission shall consult the attorney general
22 before the commission retains a consultant, accountant, auditor, or
23 engineer under Subsection (a). The retention of an attorney under
24 Subsection (a) is subject to the approval of the attorney general
25 under Section [402.0212](#), Government Code.

26 (f) The commission shall be precluded from engaging any
27 individual who is required to register under Section [305.003](#),

1 Government Code.

2 (g) Notwithstanding Sections 39.402(a), 39.452(d), and
3 39.502(b), this section applies to an electric utility to which
4 Subchapter I, J, or K applies.

5 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
6 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
7 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
8 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
9 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.