By: Cook of Harris S.B. No. 370

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 4. REPORT. The commission shall submit a report of the results of the study and any recommendations to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives not later than December 31, 2028.

SECTION 5. EXPIRATION DATE. This Act expires January 31, 2029.

SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect September 1, 2027.