

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 853
By: Moody
State Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that advanced metering and meter information networks have been deployed in approximately seven million homes in the ERCOT power region in Texas, providing customers with cost savings and operational benefits including enhanced energy management tools and faster outage response times. It has been further noted that, although ERCOT utilities are explicitly permitted to recover costs associated with the deployment of these meters and networks, there is ambiguity as to whether non-ERCOT utilities such as El Paso Electric would similarly be able to recover the costs associated with deploying advanced meters and meter information networks. H.B. 853 seeks to explicitly authorize certain non-ERCOT electric utilities to recover those costs.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 853 amends the Utilities Code to authorize the recovery of reasonable and necessary costs incurred in the deployment of advanced metering and meter information networks by an investor-owned electric utility that elects to deploy such metering and networks and that is operating solely outside of ERCOT in areas of Texas that were included in the Western Electricity Coordinating Council on January 1, 2011, that was not affiliated with ERCOT on that date, and to which certain statutory provisions relating to the restructuring of the electric utility industry do not apply. The bill subjects such an electric utility that elects to deploy such metering or networks to certain Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) rules relating to metering and billing services. The bill requires the PUC to ensure that any deployment plan approved under the bill's provisions and any related customer surcharge are not applicable to customer accounts that receive service at transmission voltage and are consistent with PUC rules related to advanced metering systems regarding customer protections; data security, privacy, and ownership; and options given consumers to continue to receive service through a non-advanced meter. The bill requires such an electric utility that elects to deploy an advanced meter information network under the bill's provisions to deploy the network as rapidly as practicable to allow customers to better manage energy use and control cost.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.

