
**Technology, Energy &
Communications Committee**

HB 1009

Brief Description: Allowing electronic payment of utility bills.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris, Upthegrove and Conway.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires utility providers to offer an electronic payment option that customers may use for payment of bills for service provided.

Hearing Date: 1/11/05

Staff: Sarah Dylag (786-7109).

Background:

Current law does not require or prohibit electronic payment options that electric, natural gas, water, sewer or telecommunications customers may use for payment of bills for services provided. The rules of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission in the Washington Administrative Code do provide authorization for telephone companies to provide electronic bills if the bills meet certain content requirements. These rules do not address electronic payment options.

Summary of Bill:

By July 1, 2005, the following entities must offer an electronic payment option that a retail customer may use for payment of bills for service provided:

- A city or town that provides electric, natural gas, water, or sewer services to retail customers;
- A city or town that provides sewer services to retail customers;
- A municipal utility that provides electric, natural gas, water, or sewer services to retail customers;
- A county that operates a sewerage or water system;
- A public utility district that provides electric, water, or sewer services to retail customers;
- A water-sewer district that operates a sewer or water system;
- A gas company, electrical company, or water company that provides gas, electric, or water services to retail customers; and

- A telecommunications company that provides telecommunications services to retail customers.

Electronic payment options must be provided without additional fees or costs charged to the customer.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.