

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2059

*As Passed House
March 13, 1991*

Title: An act relating to low-income residential weatherization and energy assistance.

Brief Description: Providing low-income persons with residential weatherization and energy assistance.

Sponsor(s): Representatives H. Myers, Grant, O'Brien, Wineberry, Orr and Anderson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Energy & Utilities, February 26, 1991, DP;
Passed House, March 13, 1991, 89-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & UTILITIES**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Grant, Chair; H. Myers, Vice Chair; May, Ranking Minority Member; Hochstatter, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Casada; Cooper; R. Fisher; Miller; and Rayburn.

Staff: Fred Adair (786-7113).

Background: Winter heating expenses can be overwhelming in some cases for low-income persons, sometimes exceeding mortgage or rent payments. To reduce the likelihood that low-income residents will lose heat in the winter, utilities are prohibited from cutting off residential space heat utility services between November 15 and March 15 if the resident follows prescribed steps.

To be eligible for this protection, the individual must notify the utility of the inability to pay for utility services, apply for home heating assistance, and apply for weatherization assistance. The utility and the customer enter into a payment plan that allows the customer to spread the cost of winter heat bills and past due amounts over the entire year.

The program expires June 30, 1991.

Summary of Bill: The winter heat shutoff moratorium program is continued indefinitely into the future.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This program, although not heavily used, is a valuable safety net for some low-income people. It has led to indirect benefits such as improved interaction between heating energy suppliers and their low-income customers.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Holly Myers, prime sponsor; Henry Yates, Seattle City Light; Priscilla Call, Seattle Department of Community Development; Jake Fey, Tacoma City Light; Don Keenan, Betty Holm, Don Andre', Jan Johnson, and Michael Karp, local community action agencies; Ron Newbry, Pacific Power and Light; and Collins Sprague, Washington Water Power Company.