
**Technology, Energy &
Communications Committee**

HB 1034

Brief Description: Allowing the electronic payment of utility bills.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris, Hudgins, Wallace, Moeller, Linville, B. Sullivan, Chase and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires a utility upgrading, changing, or purchasing new equipment related to billing or services to offer an electronic payment option to its retail customers.

Hearing Date: 1/16/07

Staff: Scott Richards (786-7156).

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:

When a utility upgrades, changes, or purchases new equipment related to billing or services, it must offer an electronic payment option that a retail customer may use for payment of bills for service provided.

Electronic payment means an internet-based method of payment that allows a customer, at the time of payment, to access an internet web page and transmit text or data controlling the amount of the payment, the date of the payment, and the account from which the payment will be made.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Additional fees or costs charged to the customer may not exceed the actual cost of providing an electronic payment option.

Utilities that have less than 5,000 retail customer accounts are exempt from the requirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 8, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.