
HOUSE BILL 2814

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Representatives Smith, McCabe, and Young

Read first time 01/17/18. Referred to Committee on Technology & Economic Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to studying state policies and programs that
2 impact the affordability of retail electric bills in Washington
3 state; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that maintaining
6 affordable retail electric rates is essential to Washingtonians and
7 their families and brings a competitive advantage to Washington
8 state's economy by attracting and retaining the energy-intensive
9 industries that provide high-wage jobs and encouraging vital
10 infrastructure development. However, the legislature finds that the
11 benefits of relatively low-cost electric power may not be equitably
12 distributed among all classes of retail electric customers in the
13 form of lower electric utility bills. According to the Washington
14 utilities and transportation commission, the number of beneficiaries
15 from investor-owned utility low-income bill assistance programs
16 increased thirty-one percent from 2010 to 2015, despite record growth
17 in the state's economy during the same period. It is therefore the
18 intent of the legislature to study state programs that have an impact
19 on retail electric bills in order to identify opportunities to
20 improve the affordability of electric utility service in Washington
21 state.

1 (2)(a) The joint legislative audit and review committee must
2 conduct a review of state policies and programs that have a direct or
3 indirect impact on retail electric bills in the state, including but
4 not limited to policies and programs that regulate greenhouse gas
5 emissions from the electric power generation, transmission, and
6 distribution sector of the economy. The review must evaluate, at a
7 minimum, the impact of the following on retail electric bills:

8 (i) Meeting conservation targets and annual renewable energy
9 targets under chapter 19.285 RCW;

10 (ii) Providing net metering under chapter 80.60 RCW;

11 (iii) Mitigating carbon dioxide emissions under chapter 80.70
12 RCW;

13 (iv) Meeting the baseload electric generation performance
14 standard under chapter 80.80 RCW; and

15 (v) Meeting the requirements of any other relevant legislation
16 enacted during the 2018 regular legislative session.

17 (b) The review must determine the effectiveness of and identify
18 any conflicting objectives among the state policies and programs
19 under review. The review must also evaluate the impact and efficacy
20 of energy-related incentive programs and tax preferences for which
21 all electric utilities in the state may qualify.

22 (c) The joint legislative audit and review committee must consult
23 with the department of commerce, the department of ecology, the
24 Washington State University extension energy office, the Washington
25 state utilities and transportation commission, and electric utilities
26 in completing the review. The joint legislative audit and review
27 committee may, at its discretion, consult with any other stakeholder
28 groups.

29 (d) The joint legislative audit and review committee must submit
30 a preliminary report of its findings to the governor and the energy
31 committees of the legislature by December 31, 2018. A final report
32 must be submitted to the governor and the energy committees of the
33 legislature by April 1, 2019.

34 (e) This section expires June 1, 2019.

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