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**SENATE BILL 5472**

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**State of Washington**

**67th Legislature**

**2021 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Van De Wege, Sheldon, Hasegawa, and Nobles

Read first time 03/05/21. Referred to Committee on Environment,  
Energy & Technology.

1 AN ACT Relating to providing support for utility customers  
2 impacted by COVID-19 through payment plans, including partial  
3 forgiveness of arrearages and a credit against the public utility  
4 tax; and adding a new section to chapter 82.16 RCW.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 82.16  
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this  
9 section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

10 (a) "COVID-19 customer support program" means a utility developed  
11 and administered program with the following provisions:

12 (i) A review process to determine that a customer's arrearages  
13 relate to an economic hardship caused by COVID-19;

14 (ii) Eligible customers must include residential customers, and  
15 may include business customers;

16 (iii) Eligible customers must agree to a payment plan by October  
17 31, 2021, providing repayment of the remaining arrearage amount  
18 within 24 months;

19 (iv) As part of the payment plan, the utility agrees to forgive  
20 50 percent of the total amount of the utility customer's arrearages;

1 (v) As part of the payment plan, the utility must make reasonable  
2 efforts to apply any available local, state, or federal utility  
3 customer assistance funds to reduce the arrearage amount; and

4 (vi) The COVID-19 customer support program may include provisions  
5 to reinstate forgiven arrearages if the utility customer fails to  
6 complete the repayment plan.

7 (b) "Credit" means the credit against the tax imposed by this  
8 chapter that each light and power, water distribution, gas  
9 distribution, or sewerage business may take each fiscal year as  
10 calculated by the department. The base credit is equal to 50 percent  
11 of the amount of arrearages written off by a utility under (a)(iii)  
12 of this subsection through a COVID-19 customer support program.

13 (2) Subject to the limitations in this section, a light and  
14 power, water distribution, gas distribution, or sewerage business may  
15 take a credit in 2021, 2022, and 2023 against the tax imposed under  
16 this chapter.

17 (a) The credit may be apportioned among monthly taxes owed  
18 through December 31, 2023.

19 (b) The total amount of the credit may not exceed the total taxes  
20 owed through December 31, 2023.

21 (c) If a utility reinstates forgiven arrearages for a customer  
22 that does not fulfill a payment plan for which a credit was  
23 previously taken by the utility, that credited amount must be  
24 corrected by the utility at the end of the calendar year in which the  
25 arrearages are reinstated.

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