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SENATE BILL 895

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2007

INTRODUCED BY

Cisco McSorley

AN ACT

RELATING TO UTILITY RATES; ENACTING THE AFFORDABLE ENERGY RATES ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. A new Section 62-8B-1 NMSA 1978 is enacted to read:

"62-8B-1. [NEW MATERIAL] SHORT TITLE.--Chapter 62, Article 8B NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Affordable Energy Rates Act"."

Section 2. A new Section 62-8B-2 NMSA 1978 is enacted to read:

"62-8B-2. [NEW MATERIAL] FINDINGS.--The legislature finds that:

A. electricity and gas services are necessities for which a low affordable rate is desirable and reduction of usage

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1 through conservation is an appropriate and effective way to
2 maintain an affordable energy bill; and

3 B. assistance to low-income customers in paying
4 energy bills that increase either because of rising costs or
5 changes in rates intended to promote conservation should be
6 provided by utilities through rate and conservation programs
7 and by the low income utility assistance fund."

8 Section 3. A new Section 62-8B-3 NMSA 1978 is enacted to
9 read:

10 "62-8B-3. [NEW MATERIAL] ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME
11 CUSTOMERS.--

12 A. Recognizing that electricity and gas service
13 where available are basic necessities and that all residents of
14 the state should be able to afford essential electricity and
15 gas supplies, the commission shall ensure that low-income
16 ratepayers are not overburdened by monthly energy expenditures.

17 B. In order to meet the needs of low-income
18 electric and gas customers who may be unable to pay their
19 electric and gas bills and who satisfy eligibility criteria for
20 assistance, the commission shall establish a program of
21 assistance by public utilities to low-income electric and gas
22 customers, the cost of which shall not be borne solely by any
23 single class of customer, to enable low-income electric and gas
24 customers to reduce their monthly expenditures for electricity
25 and gas service. Energy expenditures may be reduced through

.164736.2

1 the establishment of different rates for low-income ratepayers,
2 different levels of rate assistance and energy efficiency
3 programs.

4 C. The commission and public utilities shall
5 coordinate the programs established by this section with the
6 programs established under the Low Income Utility Assistance
7 Act by the department designated by the governor pursuant to
8 the provisions of Section 27-6-13 NMSA 1978."

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