
SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2831

State of Washington 55th Legislature 1998 Regular Session

By House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by
Representatives Crouse and Mielke)

Read first time . Referred to Committee on .

1 AN ACT Relating to unbundling the components of electrical service;
2 creating new sections; and declaring an emergency.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The definitions in this section apply
5 throughout chapter . . . , Laws of 1998 (this act) unless the context
6 clearly requires otherwise.

7 (1) "Commission" means the utilities and transportation commission.

8 (2) "Conservation" means an increase in efficiency in the use of
9 energy use that yields a decrease in energy consumption while providing
10 the same or higher levels of service. Conservation includes low-income
11 weatherization programs and programs that result in overall reductions
12 of electrical system requirements.

13 (3) "Consumer-owned utility" means a municipal electric utility, an
14 electric cooperative, a public utility district, an irrigation
15 district, a port district, or a water-sewer district that is engaged in
16 the business of distributing electricity to retail electric customers
17 in this state.

18 (4) "Control area services" means scheduling, reactive power,
19 spinning reserves, nonspinning reserves, voltage control and

1 regulation, load following, and other related services necessary to
2 sustain reliable delivery of electricity.

3 (5) "Delivery services" means the services needed to deliver
4 electricity to a retail electric customer using transmission,
5 distribution, and related facilities. Delivery services include
6 control area services, and the real property upon which the delivery
7 plant, equipment, and other delivery infrastructure is located.

8 (6) "Electric cooperative" means a cooperative or association
9 organized under chapter 23.86 or 24.06 RCW.

10 (7) "Electric meters in service" means those meters that record in
11 at least nine of twelve calendar months in any calendar year not less
12 than two hundred fifty kilowatt hours per month.

13 (8) "Electrical company" means a company owned by investors that
14 meets the definition of RCW 80.04.010 and is engaged in the business of
15 distributing electricity to more than one retail electric customer in
16 the state.

17 (9) "Electric utility" means any electrical company or consumer-
18 owned utility as defined in this section.

19 (10) "Electricity" means electric energy, measured in kilowatt
20 hours, or electric capacity, measured in kilowatts.

21 (11) "Governing body" means the council of a city or town, the
22 commissioners of a municipal electric utility, an irrigation district,
23 or public utility district, or the board of directors of an electric
24 cooperative that has the authority to set and approve rates.

25 (12) "Irrigation district" means an irrigation district authorized
26 by chapter 87.03 RCW.

27 (13) "Municipal electric utility" means a utility providing
28 electrical service that is operated by a city or town as authorized by
29 chapter 35.92 RCW.

30 (14) "Port district" means a port district within which an
31 industrial district has been established as authorized by Title 53 RCW.

32 (15) "Public utility district" means a district authorized by
33 chapter 54.04 RCW.

34 (16) "Renewable resources" means electricity generation facilities
35 fueled by: (a) Water; (b) wind; (c) solar energy; (d) geothermal
36 energy; (e) landfill gas; or (f) biomass energy based on solid organic
37 fuels from wood, forest, or field residues, or dedicated energy crops
38 that do not include wood pieces that have been treated with chemical

1 preservatives such as creosote, pentachlorophenol, or copper-chrome-
2 arsenic.

3 (17) "Retail electric customer" means any person or entity,
4 including, but not limited to, a residential, commercial, or industrial
5 customer, that purchases electricity for ultimate consumption and not
6 for resale.

7 (18) "Small utility" means any consumer-owned utility with twenty-
8 five thousand or fewer electric meters in service, or that has an
9 average of seven or fewer customers per mile of distribution line.

10 (19) "State" means the state of Washington.

11 (20) "Unbundle" means to separately identify, and publish the
12 accounting, functionalization, classification, and assignment or
13 allocation of the costs of electrical service.

14 (21) "Water-sewer district" means a water-sewer district authorized
15 by Title 57 RCW.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1)(a) By September 30, 1998, each
17 electrical company shall submit a cost study described in subsections
18 (2) and (3) of this section, and a service quality and reliability
19 report described in subsection (4) of this section, to the commission.
20 The commission shall review each cost study and each service quality
21 and reliability report in an open public meeting to determine whether
22 the filings meet the requirements of this section, and to identify any
23 issues in dispute. Nothing in chapter . . ., Laws of 1998 (this act)
24 shall be construed as either increasing or limiting the authority of
25 the commission to conduct hearings on disputed issues.

26 (b) Except as provided in section 4 of this act, by September 1,
27 1998, each consumer-owned utility shall submit a cost study with the
28 information and documentation described in subsections (2) and (3) of
29 this section, and a service quality and reliability report described in
30 subsection (4) of this section, to its governing body in an open public
31 meeting. The governing body shall determine whether the study and
32 report meet the requirements of this section. By October 1, 1998, each
33 consumer-owned utility shall submit the cost study and service quality
34 and reliability report to the state auditor.

35 (2) Except as provided in section 4 of this act, by September 30,
36 1998, every electric utility shall unbundle. At a minimum, an electric
37 utility shall include in such unbundling the accounting treatment for
38 generation and energy supply, delivery services separately identifying

1 transmission, distribution, and control area services, metering and
2 billing, customer account services, programs to support conservation or
3 renewable resources other than hydroelectric power, fish and wildlife
4 mitigation, general administration and overhead, and taxes; the
5 functionalization of costs separately for generation and energy supply,
6 transmission, distribution, and other; the classification of costs
7 separately to include, but not be limited to, energy and capacity; and
8 the assignment or allocation of costs separately to include, but not be
9 limited to, residential, small commercial, industrial, and other. For
10 the purpose of chapter . . ., Laws of 1998 (this act), the electric
11 utility shall use the data from the cost study used to formulate the
12 retail rates in effect as of the effective date of this act.

13 (3) The cost study required of each electric utility under
14 subsection (1) of this section shall include the following
15 documentation:

16 (a) A description of the fundamental cost study theory used, such
17 as fully embedded costs, marginal or incremental costs, or some
18 combination thereof;

19 (b) A detailed description of the classifications, functions, and
20 assignments or allocations of electrical service unbundled;

21 (c) The costs attributed to each of these classifications,
22 functions, and assignments or allocations and, if proportional
23 attribution of costs between classifications, functions, and
24 assignments or allocations is necessary, the proposed method of
25 attribution;

26 (d) For utilities that operate in more than one state, the costs
27 attributable to operations in Washington;

28 (e) For each class of retail electric customers, the method by
29 which the utility calculated costs, and classified, functionalized, and
30 assigned or allocated costs; and

31 (f) If the utility used marginal costs for the classifications, or
32 assignments or allocations, a clear description of those
33 classifications, or assignments or allocations, and the rationale for
34 this choice.

35 (4) The service quality and reliability report required of each
36 electric utility under subsection (1) of this section shall include, to
37 the extent such data are currently collected and reasonably available,
38 the following information:

1 (a) The level of satisfaction of the utility's customers as
2 measured by customer surveys;

3 (b) The number of customer complaints filed during a calendar year
4 with the commission if the utility is an electrical company or with the
5 governing body if the utility is a consumer-owned utility;

6 (c) The number of minutes the average customer or feeder line is
7 without electricity during a calendar year; and

8 (d) The number of times the average customer or feeder line is
9 without power during a calendar year.

10 If available, the report shall include a copy of the survey
11 instrument or script used to collect the information described in (a)
12 of this subsection.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The state auditor shall receive,
14 analyze, and summarize the studies and reports required of consumer-
15 owned utilities under section 2 of this act. The state auditor may
16 consult with the commission, the department of community, trade, and
17 economic development, the electric utilities, and others in analyzing
18 and summarizing the studies and reports.

19 (2) By December 1, 1998, the state auditor and commission shall
20 prepare a joint report on the results of the cost studies and service
21 quality and reliability reports required under section 2 of this act,
22 and shall submit the joint report to the energy and utilities
23 committees of the senate and house of representatives. The joint
24 report shall include the following information:

25 (a) A summary of the cost studies submitted by electric utilities;

26 (b) Observations regarding the consistency or lack of consistency
27 among utilities in methods of classification, functionalization, and
28 assignment or allocation, and in descriptions of unbundled costs;

29 (c) A summary of the service quality and reliability reports
30 submitted by electric utilities; and

31 (d) Observations regarding the consistency or lack of consistency
32 among utilities in the amount and kinds of information available
33 regarding service quality and reliability.

34 In the report, the commission shall also describe any issues
35 arising from the cost studies and service quality and reliability
36 reports submitted by electrical companies.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The legislature finds that: (a) Small
2 utilities operate on a nonprofit basis, and typically serve rural areas
3 where the cost of providing service exceeds that of urban areas; (b)
4 most small utilities are full-requirements customers of the Bonneville
5 power administration and do not purchase electricity and related
6 products and services individually for resale to utility customers; and
7 (c) the additional expense of unbundling and preparing service quality
8 and reliability reports is likely to significantly outweigh the
9 potential benefits to small utilities.

10 (2) The provisions of section 2 of this act do not apply to a small
11 utility. However, nothing in this section prohibits the governing body
12 of a small utility from determining the utility should unbundle and
13 comply with any or all of the provisions of section 2 of this act
14 applicable to other consumer-owned utilities.

15 (3) A small utility whose governing body has determined the utility
16 should unbundle is encouraged, but not required, to submit a cost study
17 and service quality and reliability report described in section 2 of
18 this act to the state auditor.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Nothing in chapter . . . , Laws of 1998 (this
20 act) shall be construed as requiring an electric utility to establish
21 new rates or to adopt new rate-making methods. In addition, nothing in
22 chapter . . . , Laws of 1998 (this act) shall be construed as conferring
23 on any state agency jurisdiction, supervision, or control over any
24 consumer-owned utility.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** This act is necessary for the immediate
26 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
27 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect
28 immediately.

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