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**SENATE BILL 5624**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Hasegawa and Fortunato

AN ACT Relating to transparency in retail electrical customer billing; and amending RCW 19.29A.020 and 19.29A.030.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 19.29A.020 and 2015 c 285 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

Except as otherwise provided in RCW 19.29A.040, each electric utility must provide its retail electric customers with the following disclosures in accordance with RCW 19.29A.030:

(1) An explanation of any applicable credit and deposit requirements, including the means by which credit may be established, the conditions under which a deposit may be required, the amount of any deposit, interest paid on the deposit, and the circumstances under which the deposit will be returned or forfeited.

(2) A complete, itemized listing of all rates and charges for which the customer is responsible, including charges, if any, to terminate service, the identity of the entity responsible for setting rates, and an explanation of ((~~how to receive notice of~~)) when written notice will be given for public hearings where changes in rates or charges will be considered or approved.

(3) An explanation of the metering or measurement policies and procedures, including the process for verifying the reliability of the meters or measurements and adjusting bills upon discovery of errors in the meters or measurements.

(4) An explanation of bill payment policies and procedures, including due dates, applicable late fees, and the interest rate charged, if any, on unpaid balances.

(5) An explanation of the payment arrangement options available to customers, including budget payment plans and the availability of home heating assistance from government and private sector organizations.

(6) An explanation of the method by which customers must give notice of their intent to discontinue service, the circumstances under which service may be discontinued by the utility, the conditions that must be met by the utility prior to discontinuing service, and how to avoid disconnection.

(7) An explanation of the utility's policies governing the confidentiality of private and proprietary customer information, including the circumstances under which the information may be disclosed and ways in which customers can control access to the information.

(8) An explanation of the methods by which customers may make inquiries to and file complaints with the utility, and the utility's procedures for responding to and resolving complaints and disputes, including a customer's right to complain about an investor-owned utility to the commission and appeal a decision by a consumer-owned utility to the governing body of the consumer-owned utility.

(9) An annual report containing the following information for the previous calendar year:

(a) A general description of the electric utility's customers, including the number of residential, commercial, and industrial customers served by the electric utility, and the amount of electricity consumed by each customer class in which there are at least three customers, stated as a percentage of the total utility load;

(b) A summary of the average electricity rates for each customer class in which there are at least three customers, stated in cents per kilowatt-hour, the date of the electric utility's last general rate increase or decrease, the identity of the entity responsible for setting rates, and an explanation of ((~~how to receive notice of~~)) when written notice will be given for public hearings where changes in rates or charges will be considered or approved;

(c) An explanation of the amount invested by the electric utility in conservation, nonhydrorenewable resources, and low-income energy assistance programs, and the source of funding for the investments; and

(d) An explanation of the amount of federal, state, and local taxes collected and paid by the electric utility, including the amounts collected by the electric utility for other political subdivisions but paid directly by retail electric customers.

**Sec.**  RCW 19.29A.030 and 1998 c 300 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

Except as otherwise provided in RCW 19.29A.040, an electric utility shall:

(1) Provide notice to all of its retail electric customers that the disclosures required in RCW 19.29A.020 are available without charge upon request, except that written notice must be provided for public hearings where changes in rates or charges will be considered or approved. Such notice shall be provided at the time service is established and either included as a prominent part of each customer's bill or in a written notice mailed to each customer at least once a year thereafter. Required disclosures shall be provided without charge, in writing using plain language that is understandable to an ordinary customer, and presented in a form that is clear and conspicuous.

(2) Disclose the following information in a prominent manner on all billing statements sent to retail electric customers: An itemized listing of all rates and charges, including the amount of federal, state, and local taxes collected and paid by the electric utility and whether taxes are collected on behalf of other political subdivisions.

(3) Disclose the following information in a prominent manner on all billing statements sent to retail electric customers, or by a separate written notice mailed to all retail electric customers at least quarterly and at the same time as a billing statement: "YOUR BILL INCLUDES CHARGES FOR ELECTRICITY, DELIVERY SERVICES, GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND OVERHEAD, METERING, TAXES, CONSERVATION EXPENSES, AND OTHER ITEMS."

**--- END ---**