

Introduced by Senator Escutia

February 18, 2005

An act to amend Section 382.1 of the Public Utilities Code, relating to the Public Utilities Commission.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 580, as introduced, Escutia. Public Utilities Commission: Low-Income Oversight Board.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities and can establish its own procedures, subject to statutory limitations or directions and constitutional requirements of due process. Existing law establishes a Low-Income Oversight Board to advise the commission on low-income electric and gas customers issues and to serve as a liaison for the commission to low-income ratepayers and representatives. Existing law specifies the membership of the board.

This bill would expand the duties of the board to include advising the commission on low-income telecommunications and water customer issues and to serve as a liaison for the commission to those low-income ratepayers and representatives. The bill would increase the membership of the board by one person, who is to be a representative of a telephone corporation.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 382.1 of the Public Utilities Code is
2 amended to read:

1 382.1. (a) There is hereby established a Low-Income
2 Oversight Board that shall advise the commission on low-income
3 ~~electric and gas~~ *electric, gas, telecommunications, and water*
4 customer issues and shall serve as a liaison for the commission to
5 low-income ratepayers and representatives. The Low-Income
6 Oversight Board shall replace the Low-Income Advisory Board
7 in existence on January 1, 2000. The Low-Income Oversight
8 Board shall do all of the following to advise the commission
9 regarding the commission's duties:

10 (1) Monitor and evaluate implementation of all programs
11 provided to low-income ~~electricity and gas~~ *electricity, gas,*
12 *telecommunications, and water* customers.

13 (2) Assist in the development and analysis of any assessments
14 of low-income ~~electricity and gas~~ customer need.

15 (3) Encourage collaboration between state and utility
16 programs for low-income electricity and gas customers to
17 maximize the leverage of state and federal energy efficiency
18 funds to both lower the bills and increase the comfort of
19 low-income customers.

20 (4) Provide reports to the Legislature, as requested,
21 summarizing the assessment of need, audits, and analysis of
22 program implementation.

23 (5) Assist in streamlining the application and enrollment
24 process of programs for low-income electricity and gas
25 customers with general low-income programs, including, but not
26 limited to, the Universal Lifeline Telephone Service (ULTS)
27 program.

28 (6) Encourage the usage of the network of community service
29 providers in accordance with Section 381.5.

30 (b) The Low-Income Oversight Board shall be comprised of
31 nine members to be selected as follows:

32 (1) ~~Four~~*Five* members selected by the commission who have
33 expertise in the low-income community and who are not
34 affiliated with any state agency or utility group. These members
35 shall be selected in a manner to ensure an equitable geographic
36 distribution.

37 (2) One member selected by the Governor.

38 (3) One member selected by the commission who is a
39 commissioner or commissioner designee.

1 (4) One member selected by the Department of Community
2 Services and Development.

3 (5) One member selected by the commission who is a
4 representative of private weatherization contractors.

5 (6) One member selected by the commission who is a
6 representative of an electrical or gas corporation.

7 (7) *One member selected by the commission who is a*
8 *representative of a telephone corporation.*

9 (c) The Low-Income Oversight Board shall alternate meeting
10 locations between northern, central, and southern California.

11 (d) The Low-Income Oversight Board may establish a
12 technical advisory committee consisting of low-income service
13 providers, utility representatives, consumer organizations, and
14 commission staff, to assist the board and may request utility
15 representatives and commission staff to assist the technical
16 advisory committee.

17 (e) The commission shall do all of the following in
18 conjunction with the board:

19 (1) Work with the board, interested parties, and
20 community-based organizations to increase participation in
21 programs for low-income customers.

22 (2) Provide technical support to the board.

23 (3) Ensure that the energy burden of low-income electricity
24 and gas customers is reduced.

25 (4) Provide formal notice of board meetings in the
26 commissions' daily calendar.

27 (f) (1) Members of the board and members of the technical
28 advisory committee shall be eligible for compensation in
29 accordance with state guidelines for necessary travel.

30 (2) Members of the board and members of the technical
31 advisory committee who are not salaried state service employees
32 shall be eligible for reasonable compensation for attendance at
33 board meetings.

34 (3) All reasonable costs incurred by the board, including,
35 staffing, travel, and administrative costs, shall be reimbursed
36 through the public utilities reimbursement account and shall be
37 part of the budget of the commission and the commission shall
38 consult with the board in the preparation of that portion of the
39 commission's annual proposed budget.

O