

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DOA 1/8/2004

LRB Number	03-3955/1	Introduction Number	AB-736	Estimate Type	Original
Subject					
Contributions by electric and gas utilities to the utility public benefits fund					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

Relating to contributions by electric and gas utilities to the utility public benefits fund.

The bill potentially reduces the amount of revenue deposited in the Public Benefits Fund.

The Public Benefits Fund receives revenue in several ways. First, a customer fee established in October 2000 generates approximately \$40.5 million per year. The exact amount varies slightly each year since the fee is based in part on a fixed statutory amount and in part on a formula with variables that test the amount of federal funds received and the number of low-income households in the state among others.

Second, the fund receives a small amount of voluntary contributions from customers and voluntary transfers from municipally owned electric utilities and electric cooperatives that have opted to join the state energy efficiency and low-income assistance programs.

Third, utilities are required to deposit \$67,155,050 each year into the fund from what is commonly called their "transition funds". This amount, set in 2000 by the Public Service Commission and phased in over three years, is now fixed and will not change in future years under current law.

Of the \$67.2 million in transition funds, \$45,826,000 is deposited for use with energy efficiency programs and \$21,329,000 for programs to assist low-income households through weatherization and bill payment assistance.

The bill would allow a utility to retain a portion of the \$45.8 million "if the commission determines that the portion is used by the utility for energy conservation programs for industrial, commercial and agricultural customers in the utility's service area and that the programs comply with rules promulgated by the commission."

Although the option to retain funds potentially applies to the entire \$67.2 million in transition funds, the department assumes that the low-income program portion would not be considered by the Commission as eligible. That is because the transition funds provided for low-income programs have their historic origin in those programs and have never been associated with commercial, industrial or agricultural uses.

Each of the six utilities that provide transition funds is eligible to seek a Commission determination that would allow them to retain their share of the energy conservation portion of the transition funds. The requests could total nearly all of the \$45,826,000. In each case, the actual amount would be reduced by the percentages set aside for the renewable energy program (4.5%) and environmental research (1.75%). Those set asides are in current law and SB 280 preserves them even if other funds are retained. Therefore, the potential net effect would be to reduce the funds administered by the department by \$42,961,900.

The bill also requires the PSC to establish rules for grants made by DOA for energy conservation. The rules must require projects to have a positive economic value within a period of time to be determined by the commission. The effect of this would be to deny grants to projects that have a long payback period. The fiscal effect cannot be determined until the commission has developed the rules.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications

Unknown

Fiscal Estimate Worksheet - 2003 Session

Detailed Estimate of Annual Fiscal Effect

Original
 Updated
 Corrected
 Supplemental

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Subject	
Contributions by electric and gas utilities to the utility public benefits fund	
I. One-time Costs or Revenue Impacts for State and/or Local Government (do not include in annualized fiscal effect):	
II. Annualized Costs:	Annualized Fiscal Impact on funds from:
	Increased Costs Decreased Costs
A. State Costs by Category	
State Operations - Salaries and Fringes	\$
(FTE Position Changes)	
State Operations - Other Costs	
Local Assistance	
Aids to Individuals or Organizations	-42,961,900
TOTAL State Costs by Category	\$ -42,961,900
B. State Costs by Source of Funds	
GPR	
FED	
PRO/PRS	
SEG/SEG-S	-42,961,900
III. State Revenues - Complete this only when proposal will increase or decrease state revenues (e.g., tax increase, decrease in license fee, ets.)	
	Increased Rev Decreased Rev
GPR Taxes	\$
GPR Earned	\$
FED	
PRO/PRS	
SEG/SEG-S	-42,961,900
TOTAL State Revenues	\$ -42,961,900
NET ANNUALIZED FISCAL IMPACT	
	State Local
NET CHANGE IN COSTS	\$ -42,961,900 \$
NET CHANGE IN REVENUE	\$ -42,961,900 \$
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	Date
	1/8/2004