
SENATE BILL 5624

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senators Hasegawa and Fortunato

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

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

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 19.29A.020 and 2015 c 285 s 2 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

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

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

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

20 (3) An explanation of the metering or measurement policies and
21 procedures, including the process for verifying the reliability of

1 the meters or measurements and adjusting bills upon discovery of
2 errors in the meters or measurements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 19.29A.030 and 1998 c 300 s 4 are each amended to
10 read as follows:

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

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

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

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

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