

Legislative Analysis



REQUIRE DHS TO SHARE INFORMATION WITH ENERGY PROVIDERS

Mitchell Bean, Director
Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

Senate Bill 553 as passed by the Senate
Sponsor: Sen. John Pappageorge
House Committee: Energy and Technology
Senate Committee: Energy Policy and Public Utilities

Complete to 10-19-09

A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 553 AS PASSED BY THE SENATE 10-07-09

The bill would amend Section 7 of the Michigan Low Income Heating Assistance and Shut-off Protection Act to require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to make information about people who have applied for or are receiving public assistance available to energy providers when necessary to administer a program intended to help defray energy costs and prevent utility shutoffs.

Section 7 currently requires the DHS to make available to *public utilities regulated by the Public Service Commission* (PSC) information about applicants for, and recipients of, public assistance, subject to state and federal laws and rules on confidentiality. The information must only be disclosed if necessary and must only be used by the regulated utility to administer a program intended to assist applicants and recipients in defraying their energy costs.

Under the bill, the DHS would be required to make this information available to an *energy provider*, an undefined term, subject to state and federal laws and rules on confidentiality, and allow the shared information to be used only to administer a program intended to assist applicants for, or recipients of, public assistance in defraying their energy costs *or delaying utility disconnection*. (The bill refers to "energy providers," rather than only regulated utilities, and allows information to be shared for the purposes of preventing shutoffs in addition to assistance in defraying energy costs.)

The bill would also delete subsections 7(2)(b)-(c) which require DHS to give first priority in weatherization programs to households that exceed the annual consumption cap and to promulgate rules to create an energy conservation incentive to provide direct financial benefits to households that reduce their heating energy use.

[Senate Bill 553 is identical to House Bill 4649, sponsored by Rep. Kenneth Horn, as passed by the House on March 31, 2009.]

MCL 400.1207

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact.

Legislative Analyst: Shannan Kane
Fiscal Analyst: Kevin Koorstra

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.