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Senate Bill 553 (as introduced 5-7-09)  
Sponsor: Senator John Pappageorge  
Committee: Energy Policy and Public Utilities

Date Completed: 9-17-09

### **CONTENT**

**The bill would amend the Michigan Low Income Heating Assistance and Shut-Off Protection Act to revise a requirement that the Department of Human Services (DHS) make information concerning public assistance recipients available to public utilities; and allow disclosure for the purpose of programs intended to defray energy costs.**

The Act creates a low income heating assistance and shut-off protection program, requires the DHS to administer it, and specifies various responsibilities of the Department.

Subject to restrictions prescribed by Federal regulations governing Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, rules of the DHS, or otherwise, for preventing the disclosure of confidential information to any person not authorized by law to receive it, the DHS is required to make available to a public utility regulated by the Public Service Commission (PSC) information concerning public assistance applicants and recipients, if the disclosure is necessary and use of the information is strictly limited to the purpose of the utility's administering a program created by statute or PSC order and intended to assist public assistance applicants or recipients with defraying their energy costs.

Under the bill, the DHS would have to make this information available to a provider utility, notwithstanding the provisions of the Social Welfare Act, and subject to current restrictions for preventing the disclosure of confidential information to an unauthorized person. The information would have to be made available for the purpose of a provider's administering a program intended to assist public assistance applicants or recipients in defraying their energy costs.

MCL 400.1207

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Passage of the bill could lead to an indeterminate increase in administrative cost to the Department of Human Services. The extent of this cost would be associated with the system changes necessary to share recipient information with public utilities.

Fiscal Analyst: David Fosdick

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.