

1 S.305

2 Representative Stebbins of Burlington proposes that the House Committee
3 on Environment and Energy amend the bill by adding a new reader assistance
4 and Sec. X to read as follows:

5 * * * Energy Cost Containment Program; Study * * *

6 Sec. X. ENERGY COST CONTAINMENT PROGRAM; STUDY

7 (a) The Public Utility Commission shall design a statewide energy cost
8 containment program the purpose of which is to provide financial assistance to
9 lower-income electric ratepayers pursuant to the requirements of this section.
10 On or before October 1, 2025, the Commission shall submit a written report to
11 the General Assembly that includes its findings and recommendations related
12 to such program.

13 (b) In designing the program, the Commission shall seek input from
14 interested stakeholders, including the Department of Public Service, the
15 Agency of Human Services, the statewide efficiency utility, electric
16 distribution utilities, residential customers, low-income program
17 representatives, consumer-assistance program representatives, statewide
18 environmental organizations, environmental justice entities, and any other
19 stakeholders identified by the Commission.

20 (c) The report shall include findings regarding existing low-income electric
21 ratepayer protection programs. In particular, the Commission shall identify

1 and describe the programs that exist currently in Vermont and assess their
2 efficacy in terms of eligibility, customer participation, funding, and program
3 offerings, and where there might be opportunities for program improvement.

4 In addition, the Commission shall review and assess statewide ratepayer
5 protection programs currently available in other jurisdictions and seek to
6 identify successful design elements for incorporation in a Vermont program.

7 (d) In designing the program, the Commission shall take into consideration
8 a comprehensive analysis and approach that recognizes electric costs might
9 rise but that total energy costs will decrease because of increased electrification
10 and efficiency.

11 (e) The program shall reflect the Commission’s recommendations with
12 respect to the following:

13 (1) coordination with existing efficiency programs to ensure lower-
14 income Vermonters are reducing their total energy consumption;

15 (2) existing ratepayer protection programs in Vermont and whether they
16 should continue to operate and align with the statewide program or, instead,
17 transition eligible customers to the statewide program and otherwise cease
18 operations;

19 (3) program administration and implementation;

20 (4) a funding model that allows utilities to meet their respective revenue
21 requirements;

1 (5) program eligibility requirements, which may be based on income,
2 participation in other public assistance programs, or both, or may reflect a
3 maximum percentage of household monthly income deemed available to pay
4 for electric service;

5 (6) a process for making and monitoring eligibility determinations; and

6 (7) any other matters deemed appropriate by the Commission.