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H.476

Introduced by Representative Klein of East Montpelier

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Energy; public service; electric bills

Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to require electric distribution utilities to itemize power and poles and wire charges in their bills to customers.

An act relating to transparency in billing for electric power

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 30 V.S.A. § 209b is amended to read:

§ 209b. ~~[RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE.]~~ ELECTRIC BILL

ITEMIZATION

(a) Definitions. In this section:

(1) "Bill" means a direct statement of payments due issued periodically by a retail electricity provider to a retail customer of the provider.

(2) "Fixed customer charge" means a fixed fee on a bill that a retail customer must pay to a provider regardless of how much electricity the customer consumes.

(3) "Poles and wire charge" means an item on a provider's bill that allocates by kWh the cost of building, operating, and maintaining its

1 transmission and distribution system and includes any regionalized  
2 transmission costs paid by a provider.

3 (4) “Power charge” means an item on a bill that allocates by kWh the  
4 cost of power generated or purchased by the provider to distribute directly to  
5 retail customers and includes capacity, energy, and the cost to transmit power  
6 to the point at which the provider accepts delivery of the power.

7 (5) “Provider” means “retail electricity provider.”

8 (6) “Retail electricity provider” shall have the same meaning as under  
9 subdivision 8002(9) of this title.

10 (b) On each provider’s bill, line item charges presented to the customer  
11 shall include at least the following:

12 (1) Fixed customer charge.

13 (2) Power charge.

14 (3) Poles and wire charge.

15 (4) Other kWh charges. This line item includes all charges allocated by  
16 kWh to a customer that are not included in subdivisions (2) and (3) of this  
17 subsection. The item includes the cost of billing and collection services,  
18 payroll, administrative costs, expenses, metering services, and the tax on the  
19 provider pursuant to section 22 of this title. The item may include the energy  
20 efficiency charge under subdivision 209(d)(3) of this title or the provider may  
21 include an additional line item for the energy efficiency charge.

1        (c) Each provider's bill shall set out the specific rate per kWh for the items  
2        described in subdivisions (b)(2)–(4) of this section.

3        (d) For demand and time-of-use customers, a provider may include such  
4        additional line items in its bill as necessary to implement the applicable rate  
5        schedule approved by the public service board.

6        (e) The public service board may adopt rules or orders to carry out this  
7        section.

8        (f) Every May and November, each provider shall include with its bill to  
9        each retail customer an information sheet that explains each item on the  
10       provider's bill, in a form approved by the commissioner of public service.

11       Sec. 2. 30 V.S.A. § 209(d)(3) is amended to read:

12       (3) In addition to its existing authority, the board may establish by order  
13       or rule a volumetric charge to customers for the support of energy efficiency  
14       programs that meet the requirements of section 218c of this title. The charge  
15       shall be known as the energy efficiency charge, ~~shall be shown separately on~~  
16       ~~each customer's bill~~, and shall be paid to a fund administrator appointed by the  
17       board and deposited into an electric efficiency fund. ~~When such a charge is~~  
18       ~~shown, notice~~ Notice as to how to obtain information about energy efficiency  
19       programs approved under this section shall be provided in a manner directed  
20       by the board. This notice shall include, at a minimum, a toll free telephone  
21       number, and to the extent feasible shall be on the customer's bill ~~and near the~~

1 ~~energy efficiency charge~~. Balances in the electric efficiency fund shall be  
2 ratepayer funds, shall be used to support the activities authorized in this  
3 subdivision, and shall be carried forward and remain in the fund at the end of  
4 each fiscal year. These monies shall not be available to meet the general  
5 obligations of the state. Interest earned shall remain in the fund. The board  
6 will annually provide the legislature with a report detailing the revenues  
7 collected and the expenditures made for energy efficiency programs under this  
8 section.

9 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATES

10 (a) This section shall take effect on passage.

11 (b) The following shall take effect on January 1, 2013, and shall apply to  
12 bills rendered on and after that date:

13 (1) Sec. 1 of this act, 30 V.S.A. § 209b(a)–(e) (electric bill itemization).

14 (2) Sec. 2 (energy efficiency charge).

15 (c) Sec. 1 of this act, 30 V.S.A. § 209b(f) (information sheet), shall take  
16 effect on passage.

17 (d) During November 2012, each retail electricity provider in Vermont  
18 shall include with its bill to each retail customer an information sheet in  
19 accordance with Sec. 1, 30 V.S.A. §209b(f). In addition to the requirements of  
20 30 V.S.A. § 209b(f), this information sheet shall include notice of the changes  
21 to the provider's bill, resulting from this act, that will commence on or after

- 1 January 1, 2013. Such notice shall be in a form approved by the commissioner
- 2 of public service.