Senate Bill 203

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SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced.**

Specifies, for provisions related to Oregon's telephone assistance program, that "low income customer" is defined by Public Utility Commission by rule.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to low income customers of telecommunication services; amending section 6, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. Section 6, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, as amended by section 1, chapter 622, Oregon Laws 1991, section 1, chapter 29, Oregon Laws 2007, section 25, chapter 599, Oregon Laws 2009, and section 1, chapter 77, Oregon Laws 2011, is amended to read:

Sec. 6. (1) In carrying out the provisions of section 2, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, the Public Utility Commission shall establish a plan to provide assistance to low income customers through differential rates or otherwise. The plan of assistance [*shall be designed to use, to the maximum extent possible,*] **is in addition to** the available funding offered by the Federal Communications Commission[*, and may provide different levels of assistance to low income customers based upon differences in local exchange rates*]. The plan established by the **Public Utility** Commission shall prescribe the amount of assistance to be provided and the time and manner of payment.

(2) For the purpose of establishing a plan to provide assistance to low income customers under this section, the commission shall require all public utilities, cooperative corporations and unincorporated associations providing local exchange telecommunication service to participate in the plan, except as provided in subsection (3) of this section.

(3) In lieu of participation in the commission's plan to assist low income customers, a public utility, cooperative corporation or unincorporated association providing local exchange telecommunication service may apply to the commission to establish an alternative plan for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of section 2, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, for its own customers. The commission shall adopt standards for determining the adequacy of alternative plans.

(4) The commission may contract with any governmental agency to assist the commission in the administration of any assistance plan adopted pursuant to this section.

(5)[*(a)*] As used in sections 2 to 6, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, "low income customer" [*means an individual determined by the commission:*] **has the meaning given that term by the commission by rule.**

[*(A) To be receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or from another low income public assistance program for which eligibility requirements limit participation to individ-*

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

uals with income that does not exceed 135 percent of federal poverty guidelines; or]

[*(B) To be a resident of a long term care facility, as defined in ORS 442.015, or a residential care facility, as defined in ORS 443.400, who receives medical assistance under ORS chapter 414.*]

[*(b) The commission must be able to verify the continuing participation of a low income customer in a program described in paragraph (a) of this subsection.*]

SECTION 2. This 2013 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2013 Act takes effect on its passage.