

B-Engrossed House Bill 3792

Ordered by the House June 20
Including House Amendments dated April 15 and June 20

Sponsored by Representative ANDERSEN; Representatives GAMBA, GOMBERG, Senators MEEK, REYNOLDS

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. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: Raises the amount to be collected to help with electric bills for low-income customers. Tells the PUC to look every two years at the amount to be collected. (Flesch Readability Score: 62.7).

Increases from \$20 million to \$40 million the minimum amount to be collected from the customers of electric companies for low-income electric bill payment and crisis assistance.

Directs the Public Utility Commission to reassess every two years the community level of need for low-income electric bill payment and crisis assistance. Allows the commission to adjust the amount to be collected based on its findings and changes to electricity rates. Requires the commission to report to the Legislative Assembly if the commission increases the amount to be collected by more than 2.5 percent.

Increases from \$500 to \$1,000 per month per customer site the maximum amount that a customer may be required to pay for low-income electric bill payment and crisis assistance.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to consumer protection for utility ratepayers; creating new provisions; and amending ORS
3 757.698.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** ORS 757.698 is amended to read:

6 757.698. (1) An electric company, as defined in ORS 757.600, or Oregon Community Power shall
7 collect funds for low-income electric bill payment and crisis assistance in an amount determined by
8 the Public Utility Commission. The commission shall:

9 (a) Establish the amount to be collected and rates to be charged by each electric company from
10 its customers, including customers receiving electricity from other sources, such that the forecasted
11 collection by all electric companies in a calendar year is at least [~~\$20~~] **\$40** million.

12 (b) **Reassess every two years the level of community need for low-income electric bill**
13 **payment and crisis assistance. Based on the commission's findings and changes to electricity**
14 **rates during the prior two years, the commission may increase the amount to be collected**
15 **and the rates to be charged by each electric company from its customers. If the commission**
16 **decides to increase the amount to be collected by more than 2.5 percent, the commission**
17 **shall report within 30 days from the date of the commission's decision to the Legislative**
18 **Assembly. The report must include information on the commission's findings, the amount**
19 **of the increase and the amount to be collected. The report may include recommendations to**
20 **change the limit on the amount that may be charged per customer site under paragraph (d)**
21 **of this subsection.**

22 [~~(b)~~] (c) Adjust the rates if forecasted collections or actual collections are less than [~~\$20~~] **\$40**

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.

1 million in any calendar year but shall not otherwise adjust the rates once set, **except as otherwise**
2 **provided in paragraph (b) of this subsection.**

3 [(c)] (d) Ensure that no customer pays more than [\$500] **\$1,000** per month per customer site for
4 low-income electric bill payment and crisis assistance.

5 (2) Funds collected by an electric company or Oregon Community Power under this section must
6 be:

7 (a) Paid into the Housing and Community Services Department Low-Income Electric Bill Pay-
8 ment Assistance Fund established by ORS 456.587 (2);

9 (b) Used by the Housing and Community Services Department solely for purposes related to
10 low-income electric bill payment and crisis assistance and for the Housing and Community Services
11 Department's cost of administering this section; and

12 (c) Expended in the service area of the electric company or Oregon Community Power from
13 which the funds are collected.

14 (3) The Housing and Community Services Department shall determine the manner in which funds
15 collected under this section are allocated by the department to energy assistance program providers
16 for the purpose of providing low-income electric bill payment and crisis assistance. However, the
17 department shall:

18 (a) In consultation with electric companies, investigate and may implement alternative delivery
19 models to effectively reduce service disconnections and related costs to customers and electric
20 companies; and

21 (b) Direct priority assistance to low-income customers who are in danger of having their elec-
22 tricity service disconnected.

23 (4) The department shall maintain records and provide those records upon request to an electric
24 company, Oregon Community Power and the Citizens' Utility Board established under ORS chapter
25 774 on a quarterly basis. Records maintained must include the numbers of low-income customers
26 served, the average amounts paid and the type of assistance provided. Electric companies and
27 Oregon Community Power shall, if requested, provide the department with aggregate data relating
28 to low-income customers served on a quarterly basis to support program development.

29 (5) Interest on moneys deposited in the Housing and Community Services Department Low-
30 Income Electric Bill Payment Assistance Fund established by ORS 456.587 (2) may be used to pro-
31 vide bill payment and crisis assistance to customers whose primary source of heat is not electricity.

32 (6) Notwithstanding ORS 757.310, the commission may allow an electric company or Oregon
33 Community Power to provide reduced rates or other bill payment or crisis assistance or low-income
34 program assistance to a low-income household eligible for assistance under the federal Low Income
35 Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981, as amended and in effect on July 23, 1999.

36 **SECTION 2. Notwithstanding any other law limiting expenditures, the limitation on**
37 **expenditures established by section 2 (1), chapter ____, Oregon Laws 2025 (Enrolled House**
38 **Bill 5011), for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, as the maximum limit for payment of ex-**
39 **penses from fees, moneys or other revenues, including Miscellaneous Receipts and federal**
40 **funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for contract**
41 **services, but excluding lottery funds and federal funds not described in this section, collected**
42 **or received by the Housing and Community Services Department, for Housing Stabilization**
43 **Programs, is increased by \$20,000,000, for expenditures from the Low-Income Electric Bill**
44 **Payment Assistance Fund established by ORS 456.587.**