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S.B. 96
134th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

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Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Williams

Rocky Hernandez, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Prohibits public utilities, cooperatives, propane supply companies, submetering companies, unregulated utilities, landlords, and manufactured home park operators from, or taking any action that effectively leads to, curtailing, disrupting, or disconnecting utility services until 6 months after the COVID-19 state of emergency ends.
- Allows for the curtailment, disruption, and disconnection of utility services to prevent or resolve a hazardous situation, or on request of the customer.
- Declares an emergency.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Utility service disruption prohibited

The bill prohibits the following persons and entities from curtailing, disrupting, or disconnecting utility services until 6 months after the state of emergency declared under Executive Order 2020-01D, issued March 9, 2020, ends. Additionally, the bill prohibits those persons and entities from taking any action that would effectively lead to, or cause, such results.¹

1. Cooperatives (electric or natural gas cooperative, which are not for profit companies, owned by their customers, to supply those customers with electricity or natural gas for lighting, power, or heating purposes);²

¹ Section 1(A) and (B)(1) and (2).

² R.C. 4928.01, not in the bill.

2. Propane supply companies (supply customers with propane for lighting, power, or heating purposes);
3. Public utilities (telephone companies, electric light companies, natural gas companies, pipe-line companies, water-works companies, heating or cooling companies, or sewage disposal system companies that are public utilities under the Revised Code);³
4. Submetering companies (companies that charge an amount for utility services to a residential consumer as measured through one or more submeters for a profit);
5. Unregulated utilities (utility services exempted from being included as public utilities under the Revised Code or not subject to regulation by the public utilities commission, not including cooperatives or submetering companies);
6. Landlords with respect to the residential premises of tenants (excluding dwelling units owned and operated by a college or university);⁴
7. Park operators with respect to manufactured home park lots occupied by park tenants or owners.⁵

Exception

The bill allows for a cooperative, propane supply company, public utility, submetering company, or unregulated utility to curtail, disrupt, or disconnect utility services to prevent or resolve a presently or imminently hazardous situation or on the request of the customer.⁶

Emergency clause

The bill is to take immediate effect as an emergency measure to preserve the public peace, health, and safety because it will prevent utility service interruption due to unpaid utility service bills as a result of unemployment or underemployment caused by the restrictions and other precautions imposed as part of the state of emergency regarding COVID-19.⁷

³ R.C. 4905.02 and 4905.03, not in the bill.

⁴ R.C. 5321.01, not in the bill.

⁵ R.C. 4781.01, not in the bill.

⁶ Section 1(B)(3).

⁷ Section 2.

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	02-24-21
