

HB 1610 -- Utilities

Sponsor: Schoeller

Currently, rate adjustments in the purchase price of natural gas that are approved by the Missouri Public Service Commission are exempt from certain provisions relating to business license taxation. This bill adds a qualifying provision that any purchased gas adjustment rate must include the gas cost portion of net write-offs incurred by the gas company in providing service to customers. Any net write-offs may only be recovered once through purchased gas adjustment rates, and an annual true-up of the net write-offs is required. The commission must annually review gas companies' debt collection efforts to ensure that they are prudently pursuing collection of the amounts owed by customers.

The bill also specifies that any attempt to pay, or an actual payment of, a utility bill will not adversely affect the assistance that an otherwise eligible household would receive through the Utilicare Program and removes the requirement that a household must have its service disconnected for failure to pay its bill before being eligible for assistance.

Electric or gas companies must allow customers who incur an arrearage during the cold weather rule period to retain service by paying one-third of the arrearage, plus the current bill, in each of the three months following the cold weather rule period.