

HOUSE BILL No. 2489

AN ACT concerning certain natural gas public utilities cooperatives; deregulation.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. (a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (f), a natural gas cooperative public utility may elect to be exempt from the jurisdiction, regulation, supervision and control of the state corporation commission by complying with the provisions of subsection (b).

(b) To be exempt under subsection (a), a cooperative shall poll its members as follows: (1) An election under this subsection may be called by the board of trustees or shall be called not less than 180 days after receipt of a valid petition signed by not less than 10% of the members of the cooperative.

(2) The proposition for deregulation shall be presented to a meeting of the members, the notice of which shall set forth the proposition for deregulation and the time and place of the meeting. Notice to the members shall be written and delivered not less than 21 nor more than 45 days before the date of the meeting.

(3) If the cooperative mails information to its members regarding the proposition for deregulation other than notice of the election and the ballot, the cooperative shall also include in such mailing any information in opposition to the proposition that is submitted by petition signed by not less than 1% of the cooperative's members. All expenses incidental to mailing the additional information, including any additional postage required to mail such additional information, must be paid by the signatories to the petition.

(4) If the proposition for deregulation is approved by the affirmative vote of not less than a majority of the members voting on the proposition, the cooperative shall notify the state corporation commission in writing of the results within 10 days after the date of the election.

(5) Voting on the proposition for deregulation shall be by mail ballot.

(c) A cooperative exempt under this section may elect to terminate its exemption in the same manner as prescribed in subsection (b).

(d) An election under subsection (b) or (c) may be held not more often than once every two years.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the single certified service territory of a cooperative or the authority of the state corporation commission, as otherwise provided by law, over a cooperative with regard to service territory, charges, fees or tariffs.

(f) (1) Notwithstanding a cooperative's election to be exempt under this section, the commission shall investigate all rates, joint rates, tolls, charges and exactions, classifications and schedules of rates of such cooperative if there is filed with the commission, not more than one year after a change in such cooperative's rates, joint rates, tolls, charges and exactions, classifications or schedules of rates, a petition in the case of a cooperative signed by not less than 5% of all the cooperative's customers or 3% of the cooperative's customers from any one rate class. If, after investigation, the commission finds that such rates, joint rates, tolls, charges or exactions, classifications or schedules of rates are unjust, unreasonable, unjustly discriminatory or unduly preferential, the commission shall have the power to fix and order substituted therefor such rates, joint rates, tolls, charges and exactions, classifications or schedules of rates as are just and reasonable.

(2) The cooperative's rates, joint rates, tolls, charges and exactions, classifications or schedules of rates complained of shall remain in effect subject to change or refund pending the state corporation commission's investigation and final order.

(3) Any customer of a cooperative wishing to petition the commission pursuant to subsection (f)(1) may request from the cooperative the names, addresses and rate classifications of all the cooperative's customers or of the cooperative's customers from any one or more rate classes. The cooperative, within 21 days after receipt of the request, shall furnish to the customer the requested names, addresses and rate classifications and may require the customer to pay the reasonable costs thereof.

(g) (1) If a cooperative is exempt under this section, not less than 10 days notice of the time and place of any meeting of the board of trustees at which rate changes are to be discussed and voted on shall be given to all members of the cooperative and such meeting shall be open to all members.

(2) Violations of subsection (g)(1) shall be subject to civil penalties and enforcement in the same manner as provided by K.S.A. 75-4320 and 75-4320a, and amendments thereto, for violations of K.S.A. 75-4317 *et seq.*, and amendments thereto.

(h) (1) Any cooperative exempt under this section shall maintain a schedule of rates and charges at the cooperative headquarters and shall make copies of such schedule of rates and charges available to the general public during regular business hours.

(2) Any cooperative which fails, neglects or refuses to maintain such copies of schedule of rates and charges under this subsection shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$500.

(i) A cooperative that has elected to be exempt under the provisions of subsection (a) shall include a provision in its notice to customers, either before or after a rate change, of the customer's right to request the commission to review the rate change, as allowed in subsection (f).

Sec. 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.

I hereby certify that the above BILL originated in the HOUSE, and passed that body

Speaker of the House.

Chief Clerk of the House.

Passed the SENATE _____

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.

APPROVED _____

Governor.