

2013 -- H 5604

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES - PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Introduced By: Representatives Slater, and Diaz

Date Introduced: February 27, 2013

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 39-1-37.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 39-1 entitled "Public
2 Utilities Commission" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **39-1-37.1. Ratepayers advisory board.** -- (a) There is hereby established the ratepayers
4 advisory board. The advisory board shall consist of the following public members:

5 (1) ~~Three (3)~~ Four (4) members appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives,
6 one of whom shall represent the interests of residential ratepayers; one of whom shall represent
7 the interests of the elderly and disabled; and one of whom shall represent a community-based
8 consumer organization representing low-income individuals, and one of whom shall represent a
9 community action agency LIHEAP program provider.

10 (2) ~~Three (3)~~ Four (4) members appointed by the senate president, one of whom shall
11 represent the interests of residential ratepayers; one of whom shall represent a chamber of
12 commerce; and one of whom shall represent a non-profit energy consortium of businesses, and
13 one of whom shall represent a community action agency LIHEAP program provider.

14 (3) Three (3) members appointed by the governor, one of whom shall represent the
15 LIHEAP program administration; one of whom shall represent the interests of small business
16 owners; and one of whom shall represent the interests of residents of affordable housing.

17 (b) The appointments to the advisory board shall be made as follows: each appointing
18 authority shall appoint one member to serve a term of one year, one member to serve a term of
19 two (2) years, and one member to serve a term of three (3) years. Thereafter, each member

1 appointed to the advisory board shall serve a three (3) year term. The board members are eligible
2 to succeed themselves. A vacancy, other than by expiration of a term, shall be filled in the manner
3 of the original appointment, but only for the unexpired portion of the term.

4 (c) Five (5) members shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of the board shall be
5 required for all recommendations, advice, and approvals of the board, in accordance with this
6 section.

7 (d) A board member shall not receive compensation for his or her service on the board
8 but may receive reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses, while engaged in the
9 performance of official duties of the board.

10 (e) The board shall elect annually a chairperson and vice chairperson from among its
11 membership.

12 (f) The board shall receive staff and administrative support from the division, to organize
13 meetings and take and distribute minutes. The division shall also furnish the advisory board a
14 suitable location to hold its meetings.

15 (g) The board shall meet at least quarterly and at the call of the chairperson or four (4)
16 board members. The administrator shall be present for all board meetings to inform the board of
17 the actions of the division and to respond to the board's inquiries.

18 (h) The board shall review legislative proposals and comment on existing state laws
19 relating to residential ratepayers.

20 (i) The board shall advise the administrator on matters concerning residential ratepayers
21 including, but not limited to utility shut-off policies, rate affordability, conservation measures,
22 consumer education, smart meters and/or restricted use meters, customer service charges,
23 legislation pending before the general assembly, and legislative initiatives.

24 (j) The advisory board shall issue an annual report of findings, including
25 recommendations on current or proposed state programs, policies, regulations and laws, to the
26 governor and the general assembly.

27 (k) The board shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 38-2, Access to Public
28 Records Act, and chapter 42-46, Open Meetings Act.

29 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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- 1 This act would add two additional members to the public utilities commission ratepayers
- 2 advisory board.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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