



HOUSE BILL 126 AFFORDABLE UTILITY RATES

HB 126 would require the Public Service Commission (PSC) rate affordability when determining fair, just and reasonable utility rates. That's something the utility commissions of states like Wisconsin and New York are already required to do.

When dealing with utilities currently, the Kentucky PSC is required to determine that a utility's rates are "fair and reasonable," but they are not required by law to take into account whether the utility's customers can afford that rate. In fact, the current PSC has said that they should not consider affordability in rate cases, and tends to set rates that offer a 9.5 - 10.5% profit to utilities—making legislation like this all the more necessary.

Meanwhile, across the state, families are hurting to pay their electricity bills and still have enough left for food, rent, and other basic needs. Friends, family, neighbors, and faith communities are helping people keep the lights on, because that's who Kentuckians are. But we need our government to step up and look out for us. Kentuckians in many parts of the state—including much of Eastern Kentucky and pockets of Lexington and Louisville—currently spend well above 6% of their household income (the benchmark for energy affordability) on their electricity bills.

HB 126 also lets the PSC require a management audit of a utility before the utility can ask for a rate increase. Allowing for management audits is especially important because it encourages monopoly utility companies to look at ways to cut costs internally before raising costs on consumers.

Vote YES on HB 126!

"It is the PSC's duty to protect the public welfare, not just utility profits."

-CATHY CLEMENT, LEXINGTON

HOUSE BILL 323 SOLAR CUSTOMER PROTECTION

HB 323 delays the potentially devastating impacts of last year's bad solar bill, SB 100. Solar customers who install panels in the next 4 years will benefit from a 5-10 year delay before they have to abide by the new, and likely less advantageous, net metering rate that the PSC is expected to set this year.

What Kentuckians need and deserve is strong policies that enable community-owned solar; policies to bring more solar to low-income homes; and stronger energy efficiency and renewable energy portfolio standards. But HB 323 will help mitigate some of the damage from SB 100 and could allow Kentucky's fledgling, independent solar sector to better survive the new, declined incentives to get rooftop solar.

The impact on utilities or non-solar ratepayers from this bill will be minimal. Utilities themselves have said that they needed last year's anti-solar legislation not to solve a current problem affecting their bottom lines, but to protect themselves from a problem they fear could happen down the road if the rooftop solar industry in Kentucky completely transforms. There are so few net metered households currently in Kentucky—well under 0.1%—and Kentuckians deserve the chance to have a say in their energy systems and choose rooftop solar while it still feels financially feasible.

Vote YES on HB 323!

HOUSE BILL 44

RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY

House Bill 44 is modeled after a surge of similar legislation across the country attacking the right of peaceful assembly as it pertains to gas and oil pipelines. The original bill that was filed created new criminal and civil penalties for conduct, including peaceful protest, around gas and oil pipelines and other infrastructure facilities. The original language would have created uncertainty and fear that would fundamentally chill Kentuckians' right to peaceful protest, and that would deter others from helping protesters.



Instead of passing unnecessary legislation or trying to amend down a bill whose original intent was in clear violation of the First Amendment, our legislators should say no to HB 44 altogether.

HOUSE BILL 44 - VOTE NO

Before moving through the House, HB 44 was amended to reduce some of the harm of the bill. The amendment removed some of the language that could have discouraged protests, so that now criminal penalties only increase for any activity that "tampers with a [pipeline or other infrastructure asset] in a manner that renders the operations harmful or dangerous"—while the original penalties could have applied a much wider range of protest activity. For civil actions, the amendment now only holds liable those who "knowingly direct or cause a person to engage in mischief that involves tampering with critical infrastructure."

Although better, the amended bill ultimately makes penalties harsher for behavior that is already illegal. And because of the inherent biases of our criminal justice system, it's likely that these penalties could be enforced in a way that discriminates against people of color and indigenous folks. Instead of passing unnecessary legislation, or trying to amend down a bill whose original intent was in clear violation of the First Amendment, our legislators should say no to HB 44 altogether.

Vote NO on HB 44!

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