

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 146

BY SENATOR DUPLESSIS

A RESOLUTION

To create and provide for the Utility Consumer Advocate Study Group to explore the establishment of a utility consumer advocate office to act as a residential ratepayer advocate that would operate independently from the regulatory commissions.

WHEREAS, forty states and the District of Columbia have established and provided funding for utility consumer advocates to represent utility consumers; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has a bifurcated system with the City Council of New Orleans and the Louisiana Public Service Commission which provides regulatory oversight of the utility companies located in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, both regulatory bodies are faced with the challenge of regulatory balance of ensuring just and reasonable rates, while allowing utility companies the opportunity to earn a fair rate of return on their investment; and

WHEREAS, competing interests of different classes of consumers and the utility companies require representation independent of any regulatory body; and

WHEREAS, industrial and commercial consumers have legal counsel to represent their best interests before state and federal regulatory bodies and throughout the judicial process if necessary; and

WHEREAS, residential consumers find it difficult to pool their resources and secure independent legal counsel to represent their best interests before state and federal regulatory bodies and throughout the judicial process if necessary; and

WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to explore the possibility of establishing a utility consumer advocate to represent the best interests of the residential class who represent a majority of utility consumers.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana hereby creates the Utility Consumer Advocate Study Group to explore the establishment of a utility consumer advocate office to act as a residential ratepayer advocate which would operate independently from the regulatory commissions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group created herein shall consist of

the following members:

(1) The chair of the Senate Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs Committee, or the chair's designee, who shall serve as chair of the study committee.

(2) The attorney general or his designee.

(3) The executive secretary of the Louisiana Public Service Commission, or the secretary's designee.

(4) The chair of the Louisiana Public Service Commission, or the chair's designee.

(5) The mayor of New Orleans, or the mayor's designee.

(6) The chair of the New Orleans City Council Utilities Committee, or the chair's designee.

(7) A representative of AARP.

(8) A representative of the Alliance for Affordable Energy.

(9) A representative of the Sierra Club, Delta Chapter.

(10) The director of the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency, or the director's designee.

(11) A representative of Louisiana Budget Project.

(12) A representative selected by the investor-owned utility companies operating within Louisiana.

(13) A representative of the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

(14) A representative of the National Federation of Independent Business.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chair of the Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs Committee shall convene the first meeting of the study group no later than October 1, 2010.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all departments, boards, agencies, officers, and institutions of the state and all subdivisions thereof shall cooperate with the study group in providing information to assist the study group to carry out its mission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group shall make a written report of its findings to the Senate of the Louisiana Legislature by April 1, 2011.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE