

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

H.B. 4644  
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Natural Resources  
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Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Currently, natural gas utility companies are required to post notifications for rate increases in the local newspapers for four consecutive weeks. For customers residing in municipalities with a population of less than 2,500, the gas utility can provide notice by the U.S. Postal Service to each customer or by inserting a notice in the monthly bill.

In recent years, the development of the Internet has led to an ever increasing number of customers handling their billing and payment by electronic communication.

H.B. 4644 allows the customers outside of an affected municipality or those residing in municipalities of less than 2,500 persons to receive an electronic communication from the natural gas utility company, if that is the customer's preference. This modernization will reduce the expense of providing rate increase notifications to customers and will also allow customers to choose electronic communication. Those who do not choose to utilize electronic communication would not be affected by this legislation.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 104.103, Utilities Code, as follows:

Sec. 104.103. NOTICE OF INTENT TO INCREASE RATES. (a) Makes no changes to this subsection.

(b) Authorizes a gas utility, instead of publishing newspaper notice, to provide notice to the public in an area outside of the affected municipality or in a municipality with a population of less than 2,500 by, at the customer's request, sending the notice by electronic communication to each directly affected customer who has provided the utility with the necessary contact information. Makes a nonsubstantive change.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2009.