

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: June 23, 2008
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: SB 312
AUTHOR: C. Kehoe

BILL SUMMARY: Public Utilities: Commission: Access to Filings

This bill would require the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to make all specified documents and public proceedings Internet accessible by December 31, 2010. Additionally, the bill would require the PUC to make each tariff filed by a public utility and approved by the PUC available on its Internet Web site. This bill provides an appropriation of \$270,000 from moneys derived from regulatory fees deposited in the Public Utilities Commission Utilities Reimbursement Account to the PUC to implement these provisions during the 2009 calendar year.

FISCAL SUMMARY

The fiscal impact to the PUC of complying with this bill is estimated to be \$421,000 PUC Utilities Reimbursement Account, with ongoing costs of about \$222,570 a year. The PUC anticipates they will require 3 positions to comply with the bill. The Department of Finance (Finance) notes that requests for additional resources would be evaluated in the annual budget development process.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Amendments to this bill since our analysis of the June 20, 2007 version are minor and do not alter our position. The bill has been amended to provide a current year appropriation, clarify that nothing in the act would eliminate or modify any rule or provision of law that provides for the confidentiality of information submitted to the PUC in the course of its proceedings, and would require the PUC to make tariffs filed by a public utility and approved by the PUC available on their Internet Web site.

COMMENTS

Finance opposes this bill because it would result in additional costs to the PUC Utilities Reimbursement Account (PUCURA), which would create pressure to increase fees on utility ratepayers.

The majority of the costs created by this bill would be one-time costs associated with hardware and software to support the expanded publication of documents on the PUC’s website (\$200,000 PUCURA). There also would be an annual software license required of \$3,300 per year, and personnel costs would be \$94,000 per year.

The PUC currently is working towards online access to services and documents. AB 1182 (Chapter 372, 2005) requires the PUC to examine the feasibility of receiving Advice Letters electronically and reduce paper documents received. The Statewide Information Technology Plan’s Goal 1 compels state agencies to make services more accessible to citizens and state clients, and to improve customer service through technology solutions. The Plan identifies as a priority the “further development of Internet and technology-based channels for delivery of state information and services for the convenience of the public. This bill responds to the Plan’s policy priority. However, given the PUC’s current efforts towards this policy, this bill creates unnecessary cost pressures.

Analyst/Principal (0621) K. DaRosa	Date	Program Budget Manager Karen Finn	Date
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Department Deputy Director	Date
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Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____ Position Disapproved _____
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BILL ANALYSIS/ENROLLED BILL REPORT--(CONTINUED)

AUTHOR

AMENDMENT DATE

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Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)								Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)								
	CO	PROP								
	RV	98	FC	2008-2009	FC	2009-2010	FC	2010-2011		
8660/PUC	SO	No	A	\$421	C	\$223	C	\$223		0462
<u>Fund Code</u>	<u>Title</u>									
0462	Publ Utilities Comm Utilities Reimb Acct									