



Public Utility Commission of Texas

1701 N. Congress, P.O. Box 13326, Austin, TX 78711-3326 Fax 512-936-7003

News Release
June 20, 2019

Contact: Andrew Barlow [512-936-7048]

Chairman Walker Thanks Legislature for Strengthening Protections for Texas Utility Customers *86th Texas Legislature further equips the Public Utility Commission to serve Texans*

Austin, TX – With the governor’s constitutionally mandated 20-day signing period concluded, Public Utility Commission Chairman DeAnn Walker today thanked the 86th Texas Legislature for further equipping the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) to serve Texans and oversee the utilities that provide their electricity, water and telecommunications.

“Texas is an enduring example of the power of competitive markets to provide affordable, reliable electricity and the essential infrastructure that makes the state so livable,” said Walker. “The Legislature’s thoughtful approach to tackling these challenges shows their willingness to listen to key constituencies and forge broadly beneficial solutions.”

“The Legislature has given us the legal and financial resources we need to adapt to evolving technologies, dynamic markets and customer desires as a way to sustain our state as a model of sensible regulation,” continued Walker. “It sends a strong signal to companies contemplating investment in our state’s critical utility infrastructure that Texas is a place they can make a difference. Our team at the PUC looks forward to delivering on the Legislature’s charge as this new biennium unfolds.”

House Bill 1 appropriated approximately \$38.4 million for the biennium, including funding for employees needed to support the agency’s evolving cybersecurity role and the unique challenges of regulating hundreds of water systems statewide.

Other key bills signed into law by Gov. Abbott include:

- **HB 853 (Rep. Moody), HB 986 (Rep. Price) and HB 1595 (Rep. Paddie)**, applying PUC rules on advanced meter deployment to certain non-ERCOT utilities.
- **HB 1397 (Rep. Phelan)**, creates a generation rider ratemaking mechanism for non-ERCOT utilities.
- **HB 3867 (Rep. Springer)**, allows the PUC to hire outside assistance for proceedings at regional transmission organizations that have significant impact on Texas ratepayers, such as how transmission infrastructure costs will be shared.
- **SB 64 (Sen. Nelson)**, requires the PUC to create a cybersecurity monitoring program for electric utilities, municipally owned utilities, electric cooperatives, and transmission distribution utilities.
- **SB 475 (Sen. Hancock)**, creates an electric grid security council to review and issue recommendations on grid security.



- **SB 700 (Sen. Nichols)**, makes significant changes to the water and sewer utility ratemaking program to ensure that water and sewer utilities remain financially healthy enough to provide clean and reliable water to Texans.
- **SB 936 (Sen. Hancock)**, establishes a collaborative cybersecurity outreach program to add to the work already being done by electric utilities to secure the grid.
- **SB 1012 (Sen. Zaffirini)**, clarifies the ability of electric cooperatives and municipally owned utilities in Texas to own and operate batteries.
- **SB 1211 (Sen. Hancock)**, streamlines PUC review of mergers and acquisitions of power generation companies to keep the Texas wholesale electric market vibrant.
- **SB 1385 (Sen. Hancock)**, removes the requirement for an administrative hearing when a company has failed to respond to a Notice of Violation.
- **SB 1497 (Sen. Zaffirini)**, requires retail electric brokers to register at the Commission in a manner similar to retail electric aggregators, to ensure that customers who use retail electric brokers have adequate customer protections.
- **SB 1938 (Sen. Hancock)**, allows granting a new transmission CCN only to the owner of one of the existing endpoints that will be connected by a new line.

###

About the Public Utility Commission

Our mission is to serve Texans by regulating the state's electric, telecommunication, and water and sewer utilities, implementing respective legislation, and offering customer assistance in resolving consumer complaints. Since its founding in 1975, the Commission has a long and proud history of service to Texas, protecting customers, fostering competition, and promoting high quality infrastructure. To learn more, please visit <http://www.puc.texas.gov>.