

Economic Impact Statement for Victims of Domestic Violence

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Summary. As a result of the proposed rule, victims of domestic violence would have utility deposits waived for a 90 day period upon presenting a letter from an authorized agent documenting that they had recently experienced domestic violence. Experience with similar programs authorized by the Texas Public Utility Commission and the Louisiana Public Service Commission indicates that the number of people requesting such waivers is small. In addition utilities have not expressed any problems to those commissions. The general view in these two states is that the programs work well for those involved and that the cost is minimal. Benefits would include relief of a financial burden for those victims transitioning to a new residence. Such relief would make the transition easier and, therefore, enhance living conditions for those involved which mainly include women and children. This is considered to be in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare of victims and within the public interest charge of the Commission. These qualitative benefits would likely outweigh the minimal costs. This economic impact statement was prepared (9/19/2013) at the request of the Mississippi Public Service Commission. Mississippi Statutes require the following eleven areas to be addressed in preparing an economic impact statement.

1. Specific legal authority authorizing the promulgation of the rule:

Miss. Code Ann. 77-3-45.

2. Description of the need for the proposed action:

The amendment is needed to provide financial relief to victims of domestic violence and ease the transition to a new living environment.

3. Description of the benefits which will likely accrue as the result of the proposed action:

The rule will provide financial relief to victims of domestic violence by providing a waiver of utility deposits for those who meet the requirements.

4. Description of the effect the proposed action will have on the public health, safety and welfare:

The rule provides for public health, safety and welfare of victims of domestic violence by making it easier for a transition to a new living environment that is safer.

5. An estimate of the cost to the agency, and to any other state or local government entities, of implementing and enforcing the proposed action, including the estimated amount of paperwork, and any anticipated effect on state or local revenues:

The cost to the agency can be handled within the present budget since it will be very small. Current employees can handle any additional work. Paperwork cost is minimal. Essentially someone will be responsible for answering any inquiries about the program and to annually check the filing of utilities to verify compliance with the rule. There is no effect on state or local revenues.

6. An estimate of the cost or economic benefit to all persons directly affected by the proposed action:

The cost to utilities may relate to any lost revenues relating to inability to pay bills which deposits are designed to mitigate. These costs are estimated to be minimal. The benefits are not quantifiable. Qualitative benefits to designated victims may be important. See below under “data and methodology” for further discussion.

7. An analysis of the proposed rule on small business:

There is no impact on small businesses.

8. A comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rule to the probable costs and benefits of not adopting the proposed rule or significantly amending an existing rule:

There is no alternative to the proposed rule to address this particular problem. While funding is possible through the legislature or private entities no such funding has been proposed.

9. A determination of whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rule where reasonable alternative methods exist which are not precluded by law:

There are no reasonable alternative methods to achieve the purpose of the proposed rule.

10. A description of reasonable alternative methods, where applicable, for achieving the purpose of the proposed action which were considered by the agency and a statement of reasons for rejecting those alternatives in favor of the proposed rule:

There are no reasonable alternative methods to achieve the purpose of the proposed rule.

11. A detailed statement of the data and methodology used in making estimates required by this subsection:

A review of similar rules in the states of Texas and Louisiana indicates that the benefits outweigh costs from a qualitative point of view. Programs in those states appear to deliver benefits at a minimal cost. There are no complaints or problems of record.