



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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Bipartisan PSC Bills Recommended Unanimously for Passage; to Receive Votes in both Houses on Tuesday

MADISON, WI – Measures to streamline work at the Public Service Commission (PSC) in order to save utility customers' money and provide more regulatory certainty for Wisconsin's businesses have gained bipartisan support and are poised for votes in both houses of the legislature tomorrow.

Assembly Bill 527 and its companion Senate Bill 428 were unanimously recommended for passage by committees in the state Assembly and state Senate last week.

The bills were circulated for co-sponsorship last month by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, and earned the co-sponsorship of over a quarter of the legislature.

"The measures were drafted as a collaborative effort to streamline our processes and give greater certainty to the businesses we regulate, whose customers ultimately pay the cost for service," said R.J. Pirlot, Executive Assistant to PSC Chairperson Phil Montgomery.

Key provisions of the bills include: allowing the PSC to interact with interested parties by email notifications; clarifying the effective date of PSC decisions; raising the threshold for, indexing, and setting timelines for affiliated interest transactions and certificate of authority applications; allowing utilities to conduct customer-requested abandonment and service drops; updating the renewable energy credit administration process; enacting ethics reforms for PSC Commissioners; and creating penalties for the theft of electric power and infrastructure.

Co-authors in the Assembly noted the bill will improve government functions and bolster public trust that the PSC is a quasi-judicial agency, not a political one.

"When campaigning for the state Assembly, I wanted to use my business experience to streamline government," said Rep. John Klenke (R-Green Bay). "I'm proud that by working together, we produced a bill that will make the PSC more efficient and create a more predictable regulatory climate that encourages job growth and investment."

Rep. Josh Zepnick (D-Milwaukee), the bill's Assembly co-author, said he was encouraged by state agencies who come to the legislature to improve accountability. "The bill presents common-sense measures to add accountability and improve transparency. When our constituents have confidence that government is working hard to protect their best interests, we can accomplish a lot."

The bipartisan, companion bills will be up for votes in the Assembly and Senate on Tuesday, February 21, 2012.

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