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BILL ANALYSIS

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House Bill 4649 (Substitute H-1 as reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Representative Kenneth Horn

House Committee: Energy and Technology

Senate Committee: Energy Policy and Public Utilities

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Low Income Heating Assistance and Shut-Off Protection Act to revise a requirement that the Department of Human Services (DHS) make information concerning public assistance recipients available to public utilities; and allow disclosure for the purpose of programs intended to prevent or delay utility disconnection.

Under the Act, subject to restrictions prescribed by Federal regulations governing Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, rules of the DHS, or otherwise, for preventing the disclosure of confidential information to any person not authorized by law to receive it, the DHS is required to make available to a public utility regulated by the Public Service Commission (PSC) information concerning public assistance applicants and recipients, if the disclosure is necessary and use of the information is strictly limited to the purpose of the utility's administering a program created by statute or PSC order and intended to assist public assistance applicants or recipients with defraying their energy costs.

The bill, instead, would require the DHS to make this information available on an annual basis to an energy provider, notwithstanding the provisions of the Social Welfare Act, and subject to current restrictions for preventing the disclosure of confidential information to an unauthorized person. The information would have to be made available for the purpose of a provider's administering a program intended to assist public assistance applicants or recipients with defraying their energy costs or preventing or delaying utility disconnection.

The Act also requires the DHS to authorize use of weatherization resources among the dwellings of all assisted households in the State, giving first priority to those that exceed the annual consumption cap. The bill would delete this requirement.

MCL 400.1207

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Date Completed: 9-18-09

Fiscal Analyst: David Fosdick