

By: Paula Johnson, Ruth Bowling,  
Bobby Southwood, Oscar Solis and Oscar Garcia  
Committee Assigned: Utilities & Natural Resources

R 58

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Restore, protect and use the utility safety net fund as originally intended**

A RESOLUTION TO: Reinstate and protect the utility subsidy fund, also variously known as "Lite Up Texas" or System Benefit Fund, created by a tax on electric consumers' bills to help the poor pay their utility bill, a safety net fund which helped the poor in times of excessive heat, high electric rates, and bills impossible for them to pay.

WHEREAS, THE Texas Legislature took the safety net fund (\$427 million) from electric utility consumers who had paid into the fund dedicated to help the poor pay their utility bill when they could not; and,

WHEREAS, Electricity rates have soared since Katrina and Rita, when rates were tied to the cost of natural gas, which have since been lowered, but electricity rates have not been relatively lowered; and;

WHEREAS, A vast majority of residential electric customers are paying 24 to 45 percent more for electricity today than they were paying 12 months ago, putting the ability of the poor to keep up with costs during the excessive heat of summer out of their reach, in order to survive; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 11<sup>th</sup> Texas Silver-Haired Legislature encourages and strongly recommends that the 80th Texas Legislature immediately reinstate the System Benefit Fund funds to go toward programs designed to help ease the transition to a deregulated electricity market.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 13<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2006, by  
the Utilities & Natural Resources Committee.

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Richard A. Landry, Jr. Chair

PASSED AND APPROVED this 14<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2006, by  
the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature.

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Charlotte Parks, Speaker

ATTEST:

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Carlos Higgins, Secretary