

MINUTES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS & COMMERCE

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

9:00 AM

Capitol Extension, Room E1.028

Pursuant to a notice posted in accordance with Senate Rule 11.10 and 11.18, a public hearing of the Senate Committee on Business & Commerce was held on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, in the Capitol Extension, Room E1.028, at Austin, Texas.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Charles Schwertner, Chair
Senator Phil King, Vice Chair
Senator Donna Campbell
Senator Brandon Creighton
Senator Lois Kolkhorst
Senator José Menéndez
Senator Mayes Middleton
Senator Robert Nichols
Senator Judith Zaffirini

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Brian Birdwell
Senator Nathan Johnson

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM. There being a quorum present, the following business was transacted:

The following members arrived after the roll was called: Senator Creighton, Senator Kolkhorst, and Senator Menéndez.

The Chair laid out the following interim charges and opened invited testimony (see attached witness list) for discussion:

Innovative Power Generation: Explore emerging technologies with the potential to add new dispatchable power to our electric grid including, but not limited, to small modular nuclear reactors, advanced batteries, and new developments in hydrogen and geothermal resources.

Identify and recommend regulatory and policy actions required to deploy emerging technologies within the state's electric grid.

Senator King assumed the chair.

Senator Schwertner resumed the chair.

Managing Texas Sized Growth: Evaluate the state's ability to keep pace with increasing electricity demand related to population growth and energy intensive technologies such as electric vehicles and data centers. Recommend ways to increase reliability via demand-side response programs. Study ERCOT's forecasting methodology and recommend ways to increase transparency. Monitor ongoing efforts at the Public Utility Commission related to energy efficiency programs and distributed energy resources, including the implementation of Senate Bill 1699, 88th Legislature.

Addressing the Rising Cost of Insurance: Assess the impact of rising property and casualty insurance costs on Texas property owners, real estate lenders, and commercial and industrial development. Identify ways to increase consumer transparency to better inform coverage decisions and make recommendations to ensure a competitive and affordable insurance market for consumers.

Senator King assumed the chair.

Senator Schwertner resumed the chair.

Non-Compete Agreements: Examine the impact of the Federal Trade Commission's final rule on non-compete agreements on Texas employers including, but not limited to, contractual exceptions and limitations on independent contractors, for-profit and non-profit businesses, and senior executives. Identify ways to address balancing legitimate business interests of employers while also protecting employment mobility, increasing innovation, and fostering new business formation. Report on whether any changes should be made to existing law on the criteria, procedures, and remedies on enforcing non-compete and alternative agreements.

Witnesses testifying and registering on the bill are shown on the attached list.

The Chair moved that the public testimony be closed; without objection, it was so ordered.

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There being no further business, at 5:26 PM Senator King moved that the Committee stand recessed subject to the call of the Chair. Without objection, it was so ordered.

Senator Charles Schwertner, Chair

Daniela Velez-Blanc, Clerk