



AN ACT EXEMPTING CERTAIN NATURAL GAS UTILITIES FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF A UNIVERSAL SYSTEM BENEFITS PROGRAM; AMENDING SECTION 69-3-1408, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A RETROACTIVE APPLICABILITY DATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1.** Section 69-3-1408, MCA, is amended to read:

**"69-3-1408. Universal system benefits programs -- establishing nonbypassable rate -- exemption.**

(1) ~~A~~ Except as provided in subsection (4), a natural gas utility shall implement, upon commission approval and subject to ongoing commission oversight and direction, a universal system benefits program.

(2) ~~The~~ Except as provided in subsection (4), the commission shall establish a universal system benefits charge that ~~all~~ natural gas transmission services providers or ~~all~~ distribution services providers, or both, in the state of Montana shall charge to all end-use customers, taking into consideration the current level of expenditure by the natural gas utility, cost-effectiveness, and similar costs imposed in other states. The charge may be established and revised through a universal system benefits charge tracking procedure. The method of assessing the charge may not disproportionately burden a large transmission services provider's customers. Within the universal system benefits charge, beginning January 1, 2007, a natural gas utility's minimum annual funding requirement for low-income weatherization and low-income energy bill assistance is established at 0.42% of a natural gas utility's annual revenue for the previous year. A natural gas utility must receive credit for its internal programs or activities that qualify as universal system benefits programs.

(3) ~~A~~ Except as provided in subsection (4), a natural gas utility shall file an annual report of its universal system benefits charges, programs, and program funding levels with the commission in a manner prescribed by the commission.

(4) A natural gas utility that serves 200 or fewer customers is exempt from the requirements of subsections (1) through (3)."

**Section 2. Saving clause.** [This act] does not affect rights and duties that matured, penalties that were incurred, or proceedings that were begun before [the effective date of this act].

**Section 3. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

**Section 4. Retroactive applicability.** [This act] applies retroactively, within the meaning of 1-2-109, to the compliance year beginning January 1, 2015.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,  
SB 0010, originated in the Senate.

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Secretary of the Senate

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President of the Senate

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

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Speaker of the House

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

SENATE BILL NO. 10  
INTRODUCED BY J. KEANE  
BY REQUEST OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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