

***Technology, Telecommunications
& Energy Committee***

HB 1142

Brief Description: *Providing utility service in mobile home parks.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Crouse, Benson, Schindler and Esser.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Requires that a mobile home park tenant's utilities be placed in the tenant's name if requested by the park's landlord and if the utilities can reasonably be identified separately.*
- *Eliminates any liability on the part of the landlord for a tenant's utility costs if the utilities are in the tenant's name.*

Hearing Date: *2/14/01*

Staff: *Pam Madson (786-7166).*

Background:

Utilities operated by municipalities and other political subdivisions of the state are authorized to place liens for charges due but unpaid against the property to which utility services are provided. Examples are liens for municipal water, sewer, and electricity services, and for water-sewer districts and irrigation district services.

Different governmental utilities have different lien provisions. The differences involve the method of enforcing the lien, the number of months of unpaid charges that may be subject to a lien, the priority status of the lien, and how the lien is perfected. In addition, similar utilities that are subject to the same lien laws vary greatly in size and have significantly different billing systems.

Public utility districts (PUD) do not have direct lien authority for the enforcement of charges for utility services provided to customers.

Investor-owned utilities are required to levy charges for services that are just, fair, reasonable, and sufficient. Investor-owned utilities have no general lien authority, and may not refuse to serve a new tenant based on a prior tenant's failure to pay utility charges.

Summary of Bill:

Any mobile home landlord may ask a public or investor-owned utility to provide services to tenants in the name of the tenant, if the tenant's utility can be reasonably identified separately. Any costs for the utilities are the exclusive responsibility of the tenant. The landlord is not liable for charges for services provided in the name of the tenant.

These provisions apply to utility services provided by municipal utilities, public utility districts, water-sewer districts, and investor-owned utilities.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on February 2, 2001.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*