

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 10081

To condition the granting of State energy program financial assistance on compliance with rules banning spurious charges by regulated electric utilities, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 10, 2026

Mr. VINDMAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To condition the granting of State energy program financial assistance on compliance with rules banning spurious charges by regulated electric utilities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “No Utility Junk Fees
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Regulated electric utilities hold special privi-
2 leges and obligations to serve the public interest, in-
3 cluding keeping energy bills reasonable and afford-
4 able for residential consumers.

5 (2) Spurious charges by regulated electric utili-
6 ties constitute an unjustified extraction of money
7 from residential consumers beyond the legitimate
8 costs of electricity delivery, contradicting utilities'
9 fundamental obligation as stewards of public infra-
10 structure.

11 (3) Payment convenience fees and other junk
12 fees directly increase the total cost of energy for res-
13 idential consumers, making electricity less affordable
14 and undermining efforts to expand access to reliable
15 energy.

16 (4) Many regulated electric utilities impose fees
17 on payment channels that cost them little to nothing
18 to process, extracting pure profit under the guise of
19 cost recovery.

20 (5) Conditioning the granting of State energy
21 program financial assistance on the elimination of
22 spurious charges is a reasonable exercise of the
23 spending power of Congress to ensure Federal en-
24 ergy efficiency investments benefit residential con-
25 sumers rather than subsidize utility fee extraction.

1 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) **COST OF ACCEPTANCE.**—The term “cost of
4 acceptance”—

5 (A) means the direct, documented cost in-
6 curred by a regulated electric utility, or its
7 third-party service provider, for processing a
8 payment through a payment channel, including
9 costs incurred from interchange fees, gateway
10 or processor fees, payment fraud prevention
11 charges, and labor costs directly attributable to
12 processing the payment through the payment
13 channel; and

14 (B) does not include general overhead,
15 profit margins, or operational costs incurred by
16 the regulated electric utility, or its third-party
17 service provider, that are not directly tied to
18 payment processing.

19 (2) **PAYMENT CHANNEL.**—The term “payment
20 channel” means any mechanism by which a residen-
21 tial consumer may make a payment for electric en-
22 ergy consumed by the residential consumer and in-
23 cludes the mail, the telephone, the internet, auto-
24 mated clearing houses, and in-person services pro-
25 vided at an office or kiosk.

1 (3) REGULATED ELECTRIC UTILITY.—The term
2 “regulated electric utility” has the meaning given
3 the term “State regulated electric utility” in section
4 3 of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of
5 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2602).

6 (4) RESIDENTIAL CONSUMER.—The term “resi-
7 dential consumer” means any individual that pur-
8 chases electric energy for personal, family, or house-
9 hold purposes.

10 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
11 the Secretary of Energy.

12 (6) SPURIOUS CHARGE.—The term “spurious
13 charge” means any charge imposed by a regulated
14 electric utility, or its third-party service provider, on
15 a residential consumer as a condition of accepting a
16 payment for electric energy made using a payment
17 channel that—

18 (A) exceeds the greater of—

19 (i) the amount equal to 150 percent of
20 the regulated electric utility’s documented
21 cost of acceptance; or

22 (ii) \$3.00;

23 (B) is imposed on a residential consumer
24 who used a payment channel through which the
25 regulated electric utility incurred no docu-

1 mented cost of acceptance, including in-person
2 payments at utility offices, automatic recurring
3 payments, direct automated clearing house
4 transfers, and mail payments; or

5 (C) is imposed without affirmative, prior,
6 and clear disclosure of—

7 (i) the amount of the charge;

8 (ii) the reason for the charge;

9 (iii) the total amount due, including
10 the charge and any other amount due; and

11 (iv) information about a payment
12 channel that could be used by the residen-
13 tial consumer that does not include the
14 charge.

15 (7) STATE.—The term “State” has the mean-
16 ing given such term in section 3 of the Energy Pol-
17 icy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6202).

18 (8) STATE ENERGY PROGRAM FINANCIAL AS-
19 SISTANCE.—The term “State energy program finan-
20 cial assistance” means the financial assistance
21 granted to a State under section 363 of the Energy
22 Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6323).

1 **SEC. 4. CONDITION ON GRANTING STATE ENERGY PRO-**
2 **GRAM FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding part D of the
4 Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6321 et
5 seq.), beginning with the first full fiscal year following the
6 date of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall with-
7 hold 10 percent of the amount of State energy program
8 financial assistance to be granted to a State in a fiscal
9 year unless the Secretary determines the State—

10 (1) prohibits electric utilities regulated by the
11 State from imposing spurious charges on residential
12 consumers;

13 (2) requires electric utilities regulated by the
14 State to, when billing a residential consumer for the
15 electric energy consumed by the residential con-
16 sumer, disclose to such consumer—

17 (A) the amount of any charge applied that
18 reflects a cost associated with processing the
19 payment submitted by the residential consumer;

20 (B) the reason for any such charge;

21 (C) information about a payment channel
22 that could be used by the residential consumer
23 to pay the bill that would not incur such
24 charge; and

25 (D) the total amount due, including any
26 such charge and any other amount due;

1 (3) requires electric utilities regulated by the
2 State to makes available to residential consumers at
3 least one fee-free payment channel that is accessible
4 without internet access;

5 (4) prohibits electric utilities regulated by the
6 State from imposing fees on automatic recurring
7 payments and electronic fund transfers (as such
8 term is defined in section 903 of the Electronic
9 Fund Transfer Act (15 U.S.C. 1693a)) by residen-
10 tial consumers; and

11 (5) enforces the prohibitions and requirements
12 of paragraphs (1) through (4), including by inves-
13 tigating complaints, imposing penalties for non-
14 compliance, and allowing residential consumers to
15 seek recovery of unlawfully assessed fees.

16 (b) COMPLIANCE.—

17 (1) SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTATION.—Not
18 later than 18 months after the date of enactment of
19 this section, and annually thereafter, each State
20 shall submit to the Secretary documentation that
21 demonstrates the State’s compliance with subsection
22 (a).

23 (2) DETERMINATION OF COMPLIANCE.—Not
24 later than 60 days after receiving complete docu-
25 mentation submitted by a State under paragraph

1 (1), the Secretary shall determine whether the State
2 is in compliance with subsection (a).

3 (c) RESTORATION.—If the Secretary withholds from
4 a State financial assistance under subsection (a), the Sec-
5 retary shall grant to the State the withheld financial as-
6 sistance in the following fiscal year if the State is in com-
7 pliance for that fiscal year.

8 (d) CURE PERIOD.—If the Secretary determines a
9 State does not comply with subsection (a) for a fiscal year,
10 the State shall have 90 days to remedy the noncompliance
11 before the Secretary withholds financial assistance from
12 the State under subsection (a).

13 (e) METHODS OF COMPLIANCE.—A State may com-
14 ply with subsection (a) through any legally binding mecha-
15 nism under State law, including legislation, administrative
16 rulemaking, or binding orders of a State regulatory au-
17 thority, provided such mechanism achieves the consumer
18 protections required under such subsection.

19 (f) ADMINISTRATION.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of carrying out
21 this section, the Secretary shall—

22 (A) establish procedures for States to sub-
23 mit compliance documentation under subsection
24 (b);

1 (B) maintain a public database that identi-
2 fies the status of each State's compliance with
3 subsection (a);

4 (C) provide technical assistance to States
5 to comply with subsection (a);

6 (D) issue guidance interpreting this sec-
7 tion;

8 (E) establish a process to appeal a deter-
9 mination by the Secretary that a State does not
10 comply with subsection (a); and

11 (F) annually report to Congress on State
12 compliance rates.

13 (2) DEADLINE FOR INITIAL REGULATIONS.—

14 The Secretary shall promulgate regulations to carry
15 out this section not later than 9 months after the
16 date of enactment of this section.

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