

may be necessary, to carry out the purposes of the provisional international marketing program for agricultural commodities and trade center. This appropriation shall not be used for the employment of more than one full-time equivalent staff unit.

**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 9. This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately.

Passed the House January 27, 1984.

Passed the Senate February 22, 1984.

Approved by the Governor March 1, 1984.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 1, 1984.

## CHAPTER 58

[Substitute House Bill No. 1270]

### MOBILE HOME LANDLORD AND TENANT LAW REVISED

AN ACT Relating to mobile home landlords and tenants; amending section 6, chapter 279, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. as last amended by section 18, chapter 304, Laws of 1981 and RCW 59.20.060; amending section 7, chapter 279, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. as last amended by section 19, chapter 304, Laws of 1981 and RCW 59.20.070; amending section 6, chapter 152, Laws of 1980 and RCW 59.20.075; amending section 8, chapter 279, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. as last amended by section 21, chapter 304, Laws of 1981 and RCW 59.20.080; amending section 8, chapter 186, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 59.20.130; amending section 13, chapter 186, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 59.20.180; amending section 11, chapter 186, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 59.20.160; adding new sections to chapter 59.20 RCW; and prescribing penalties.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

Sec. 1. Section 6, chapter 279, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. as last amended by section 18, chapter 304, Laws of 1981 and RCW 59.20.060 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Any mobile home (~~lot~~) space tenancy regardless of the term, shall be based upon a written rental agreement, signed by the parties, which shall contain:

(a) The terms for the payment of rent, including time and place, and any additional charges to be paid by the tenant. Additional charges that occur less frequently than monthly shall be itemized in a billing to the tenant;

(b) Reasonable rules for guest parking which shall be clearly stated;

(c) The rules and regulations of the park;

(d) The name and address of the person who is the landlord, and if such person does not reside in the state (~~where the mobile home park is located~~) there shall also be designated by name and address a person who resides in the county where the mobile home park is located who is authorized to act as agent for the purposes of service of notices and process. If no

designation is made of a person to act as agent, then the person to whom rental payments are to be made shall be considered the agent;

(e) The terms and conditions under which any deposit or portion thereof may be withheld by the landlord upon termination of the rental agreement if any moneys are paid to the landlord by the tenant as a deposit or as security for performance of the tenant's obligations in a rental agreement;

(f) A listing of ~~((those))~~ the utilities ((and)), services, and facilities which will be ~~((provided at the time the rental agreement is executed and will continue to be offered for the term of))~~ available to the tenant during the tenancy and the nature of the fees, if any, to be charged; ((and))

(g) A description of the boundaries of a mobile home ~~((tot))~~ space sufficient to inform the tenant of the exact location of his ~~((tot))~~ space in relation to other tenants' ~~((tots))~~ spaces; and

(h) A statement of the current zoning of the land on which the mobile home park is located.

(2) Any rental agreement executed between the landlord and tenant shall not contain any provision:

(a) ~~((Any provision))~~ Which allows the landlord to charge a fee for guest parking unless a violation of the rules for guest parking occurs: **PROVIDED**, That a fee may be charged for guest parking which covers an extended period of time as defined in the rental agreement;

(b) ~~((Any provision))~~ Which authorizes the towing or impounding of a vehicle except upon notice to the owner thereof or the tenant whose guest is the owner of said vehicle;

(c) ~~((Any provision))~~ Which allows the landlord to alter the due date for rent payment or increase the rent: (i) During the term of the rental agreement if the term is less than one year, or (ii) more frequently than annually if the term is for one year or more: **PROVIDED**, That a rental agreement may include an escalation clause for a pro rata share of any increase in the mobile home park's real property taxes or utility assessments or charges, over the base taxes or utility assessments or charges of the year in which the rental agreement took effect, if the clause also provides for a pro rata reduction in rent or other charges in the event of a reduction in real property taxes or utility assessments or charges, below the base year: **PROVIDED FURTHER**, That a rental agreement for a term exceeding one year may provide for annual increases in rent in specified amounts or by a formula specified in such agreement;

(d) ~~((Any provision))~~ By which the tenant agrees to waive or forego rights or remedies under this chapter;

(e) ~~((Any provision))~~ Allowing the landlord to charge an "entrance fee" or an "exit fee";

(f) ~~((Any provision))~~ Which allows the landlord to charge a fee for guests: **PROVIDED**, That a landlord may establish rules charging for

guests who remain on the premises for more than fifteen days in any sixty-day period; ((or))

(g) ~~((Any provision))~~ By which the tenant agrees to waive or forego homestead rights provided by chapter 6.12 RCW. This subsection shall not prohibit such waiver after a default in rent so long as such waiver is in writing signed by the husband and wife or by an unmarried claimant and in consideration of the landlord's agreement not to terminate the tenancy for a period of time specified in the waiver if the landlord would be otherwise entitled to terminate the tenancy under this chapter; or

(h) By which, at the time the rental agreement is entered into, the landlord and tenant agree to the selection of a particular arbitrator.

Sec. 2. Section 7, chapter 279, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. as last amended by section 19, chapter 304, Laws of 1981 and RCW 59.20.070 are each amended to read as follows:

A landlord shall not:

(1) Deny any tenant the right to sell such tenant's mobile home within a park or require the removal of the mobile home from the park because of the sale thereof. Requirements for the transfer of the rental agreement are in RCW 59.20.073;

(2) Restrict the tenant's freedom of choice in purchasing goods or services but may reserve the right to approve or disapprove any exterior structural improvements on a mobile home ~~((lot))~~ space: PROVIDED, That door-to-door solicitation in the mobile home park may be restricted in the rental agreement;

(3) Prohibit meetings by tenants of the mobile home park to discuss mobile home living and affairs, conducted at reasonable times and in an orderly manner on the premises, nor penalize any tenant for participation in such activities;

(4) Evict a tenant, terminate a rental agreement, decline to renew a rental agreement, increase rental or other tenant obligations, decrease services, or modify park rules in retaliation for any of the following actions on the part of a tenant taken in good faith:

(a) Filing a complaint with any state, county, or municipal governmental authority relating to any alleged violation by the landlord of an applicable statute, regulation, or ordinance;

(b) Requesting the landlord to comply with the provision of this chapter or other applicable statute, regulation, or ordinance of the state, county, or municipality;

(c) Filing suit against the landlord for any reason;

(d) Participation or membership in any homeowners association or group; ((or))

(5) Charge to any tenant a utility fee in excess of actual utility costs or intentionally cause termination or interruption of any tenant's utility services, including water, heat, electricity, or gas, except when an interruption of a reasonable duration is required to make necessary repairs; or

(6) Remove or exclude a tenant from the premises unless this chapter is complied with or the exclusion or removal is under an appropriate court order.

Sec. 3. Section 6, chapter 152, Laws of 1980 and RCW 59.20.075 are each amended to read as follows:

Initiation by the landlord of any action listed in RCW 59.20.070(4) within one hundred twenty days after a good faith and lawful act by the tenant or within one hundred twenty days after any inspection or proceeding of a governmental agency resulting from such act, shall create a rebuttable presumption affecting the burden of proof, that the action is a reprisal or retaliatory action against the tenant: PROVIDED, That if the court finds that the tenant made a complaint or report to a governmental authority within one hundred twenty days after notice of a proposed increase in rent or other action in good faith by the landlord, there is a rebuttable presumption that the complaint or report was not made in good faith: PROVIDED FURTHER, That no presumption against the landlord shall arise under this section, with respect to an increase in rent, if the landlord, in a notice to the tenant of increase in rent, specifies reasonable grounds for said increase, which grounds may include a substantial increase in market value due to remedial action under this chapter. (~~In any action or eviction proceeding where the tenant prevails upon his claim or defense that the landlord has violated this section, the tenant shall be entitled to recover his costs of suit, including a reasonable attorney's fee, and where the landlord prevails upon his claim he shall be entitled to recover his costs of suit, including a reasonable attorney's fee. PROVIDED FURTHER, That neither party may recover attorney's fees to the extent that their legal services are provided at no cost to them.~~)

Sec. 4. Section 8, chapter 279, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. as last amended by section 21, chapter 304, Laws of 1981 and RCW 59.20.080 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the landlord shall not terminate a tenancy, of whatever duration except for one or more of the following reasons:

(a) Substantial violation, or repeated or periodic violations of the rules of the mobile home park as established by the landlord at the inception of the tenancy or as assumed subsequently with the consent of the tenant or for violation of the tenant's duties as provided in RCW 59.20.140 (as now or hereafter amended. The tenant shall be given written notice of a fifteen day period in which to comply or vacate)). The tenant shall be given written notice to cease the rule violation immediately. The notice shall state that

failure to cease the violation of the rule or any subsequent violation of that or any other rule shall result in termination of the tenancy, and that the tenant shall vacate the premises within fifteen days: PROVIDED, That for a periodic violation the notice shall also specify that repetition of the same violation shall result in termination: PROVIDED FURTHER, That in the case of a violation of a "material change" in park rules with respect to pets, tenants with minor children living with them, or recreational facilities, the tenant shall be given written notice under this chapter of a six month period in which to comply or vacate(~~In the case of periodic rather than continuous violation, said notice shall specify that the same violation repeated shall result in termination~~));

(b) Nonpayment of rent or other charges specified in the rental agreement, upon five days written notice to pay rent and/or other charges or to vacate;

(c) Conviction of the tenant of a crime, commission of which threatens the health, safety, or welfare of the other mobile home park tenants. The tenant shall be given written notice of a fifteen day period in which to vacate;

(d) Failure of the tenant to comply with local ordinances and state laws and regulations relating to mobile homes or mobile home living within a reasonable time after the tenant's receipt of notice of such noncompliance from the appropriate governmental agency;

(e) Change of land use of the mobile home park including, but not limited to, conversion to a use other than for mobile homes or conversion of the mobile home park to a mobile home park cooperative or mobile home park subdivision: PROVIDED, That the landlord shall give the tenants twelve months' notice in advance of the proposed effective date of such change.

(2) A landlord may terminate any tenancy without cause. Such termination shall be effective (~~six~~) twelve months from the date the landlord serves notice of termination upon the tenant or at the end of the current tenancy, whichever is later: PROVIDED, That a landlord (~~may~~) shall not terminate a tenancy for any reason or basis which is prohibited under RCW 59.20.070 (3) or (4)(~~as now or hereafter amended~~;) or is intended to circumvent the provisions of (1)(e) of this section.

(3) Within five days of a notice of eviction as required by subsection (1)(a) or (2) of this section, the landlord and tenant shall submit any dispute, including the decision to terminate the tenancy without cause, to mediation. The parties may agree in writing to mediation by an independent third party or through industry mediation procedures. If the parties cannot agree, then mediation shall be through industry mediation procedures. A duty is imposed upon both parties to participate in the mediation process in good faith for a period of ten days for an eviction under subsection (1)(a) of this section, or for a period of thirty days for an eviction under subsection

(2) of this section. It is a defense to an eviction under subsection (1)(a) or (2) of this section that a landlord did not participate in the mediation process in good faith.

Sec. 5. Section 8, chapter 186, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 59-20.130 are each amended to read as follows:

It shall be the duty of the landlord to:

(1) Comply with codes, statutes, ordinances, and administrative rules applicable to the mobile home park;

(2) Maintain the common premises and prevent the accumulation of stagnant water and to prevent the detrimental effects of moving water when such condition is not the fault of the tenant;

~~((2))~~ (3) Keep any shared or common premises reasonably clean, sanitary, and safe from defects to reduce the hazards of fire or accident;

~~((3))~~ (4) Keep all common premises of the mobile home park, not in the possession of tenants, free of weeds or plant growth noxious and detrimental to the health of the tenants and free from potentially injurious or unsightly objects and condition;

~~((4))~~ (5) Exterminate or make a reasonable effort to exterminate rodents, vermin, or other pests dangerous to the health and safety of the tenant whenever infestation exists on the common premises or whenever infestation occurs in the interior of a mobile home as a result of infestation existing on the common premises;

~~((5))~~ (6) Maintain and protect all utilities provided to the mobile home in good working condition. Maintenance responsibility shall be determined at that point where the normal mobile home utilities "hook-ups" connect to those provided by the landlord or utility company;

~~((6))~~ (7) Respect the privacy of the tenants and shall have no right of entry to a mobile home without the prior written consent of the occupant, except in case of emergency or when the occupant has abandoned the mobile home. Such consent may be revoked in writing by the occupant at any time. The ownership or management shall have a right of entry upon the land upon which a mobile home is situated for maintenance of utilities and protection of the mobile home park at any reasonable time or in an emergency, but not in a manner or at a time which would interfere with the occupant's quiet enjoyment;

~~((7))~~ (8) Allow tenants freedom of choice in the purchase of goods and services, and not unreasonably restrict access to the mobile home park for such purposes; ~~and~~

~~((8))~~ (9) Maintain roads within the mobile home park in good condition; and

(10) Notify each tenant within five days after a petition has been filed by the landlord for a change in the zoning of the land where the mobile home park is located and make a description of the change available to the tenant.

A landlord shall not have a duty to repair a defective condition under this section, nor shall any defense or remedy be available to the tenant under this chapter, if the defective condition complained of was caused by the conduct of the tenant, the tenant's family, invitee, or other person acting under the tenant's control, or if a tenant unreasonably fails to allow the landlord access to the property for purposes of repair.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

If at any time during the tenancy the landlord fails to carry out the duties required by RCW 59.20.130, the tenant may, in addition to pursuit of remedies otherwise provided the tenant by law, deliver written notice to the landlord, which notice shall specify the property involved, the name of the owner, if known, and the nature of the defective condition. For the purposes of this chapter, a reasonable time for the landlord to commence remedial action after receipt of such notice by the tenant shall be, except where circumstances are beyond the landlord's control;

(1) Not more than twenty-four hours, where the defective condition is imminently hazardous to life;

(2) Not more than forty-eight hours, where the landlord fails to provide water or heat;

(3) Subject to the provisions of subsections (1) and (2) of this section, not more than seven days in the case of a repair under section 5(3) of this act;

(4) Not more than thirty days in all other cases.

In each instance the burden shall be on the landlord to see that remedial work under this section is completed with reasonable promptness.

Where circumstances beyond the landlord's control, including the availability of financing, prevent the landlord from complying with the time limitations set forth in this section, the landlord shall endeavor to remedy the defective condition with all reasonable speed.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 7. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

The tenant shall be current in the payment of rent including all utilities which the tenant has agreed in the rental agreement to pay before exercising any of the remedies accorded the tenant under the provisions of this chapter: PROVIDED, That this section shall not be construed as limiting the tenant's civil remedies for negligent or intentional damages: PROVIDED FURTHER, That this section shall not be construed as limiting the tenant's right in an unlawful detainer proceeding to raise the defense that there is no rent due and owing.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 8. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

(1) If at any time during the tenancy, the landlord fails to carry out any of the duties imposed by RCW 59.20.130, and notice of the defect is given to the landlord pursuant to section 6 of this act, the tenant may submit to the landlord or the landlord's designated agent by certified mail or in person at least two bids to perform the repairs necessary to correct the defective condition from licensed or registered persons, or if no licensing or registration requirement applies to the type of work to be performed, from responsible persons capable of performing such repairs. Such bids may be submitted to the landlord at the same time as notice is given pursuant to section 6 of this act.

(2) If the landlord fails to commence repair of the defective condition within a reasonable time after receipt of notice from the tenant, the tenant may contract with the person submitting the lowest bid to make the repair, and upon the completion of the repair and an opportunity for inspection by the landlord or the landlord's designated agent, the tenant may deduct the cost of repair from the rent in an amount not to exceed the sum expressed in dollars representing one month's rental of the tenant's mobile home space in any calendar year. When, however, the landlord is required to begin remedying the defective condition within thirty days under section 6 of this act, the tenant cannot contract for repairs for at least fifteen days following receipt of bids by the landlord. The total costs of repairs deducted by the tenant in any calendar year under this subsection shall not exceed the sum expressed in dollars representing one month's rental of the tenant's mobile home space.

(3) Two or more tenants shall not collectively initiate remedies under this section. Remedial action under this section shall not be initiated for conditions in the design or construction existing in a mobile home park before the effective date of this act.

(4) The provisions of this section shall not:

(a) Create a relationship of employer and employee between landlord and tenant; or

(b) Create liability under the worker's compensation act; or

(c) Constitute the tenant as an agent of the landlord for the purposes of RCW 60.04.010 and 60.04.040.

(5) Any repair work performed under this section shall comply with the requirements imposed by any applicable code, statute, ordinance, or rule. A landlord whose property is damaged because of repairs performed in a negligent manner may recover the actual damages in an action against the tenant.

(6) Nothing in this section shall prevent the tenant from agreeing with the landlord to undertake the repairs in return for cash payment or a reasonable reduction in rent, the agreement to be between the parties, and this agreement does not alter the landlord's obligations under this chapter.



**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 9. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

(1) If a court or an arbitrator determines that:

(a) A landlord has failed to carry out a duty or duties imposed by RCW 59.20.130; and

(b) A reasonable time has passed for the landlord to remedy the defective condition following notice to the landlord under section 6 of this act or such other time as may be allotted by the court or arbitrator; the court or arbitrator may determine the diminution in rental value of the property due to the defective condition and shall render judgment against the landlord for the rent paid in excess of such diminished rental value from the time of notice of such defect to the time of decision and any costs of repair done pursuant to section 4 of this act for which no deduction has been previously made. Such decisions may be enforced as other judgments at law and shall be available to the tenant as a set-off against any existing or subsequent claims of the landlord.

The court or arbitrator may also authorize the tenant to contract to make further corrective repairs. The court or arbitrator shall specify a time period in which the landlord may make such repairs before the tenant may contract for such repairs. Such repairs shall not exceed the sum expressed in dollars representing one month's rental of the tenant's mobile home space in any one calendar year.

(2) The tenant shall not be obligated to pay rent in excess of the diminished rental value of the mobile home space until such defect or defects are corrected by the landlord or until the court or arbitrator determines otherwise.

**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 10. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

If a court or arbitrator determines a defective condition as described in RCW 59.20.130 to be so substantial that it is unfeasible for the landlord to remedy the defect within the time allotted by section 6 of this act, and that the tenant should not remain on the mobile home space in its defective condition, the court or arbitrator may authorize the termination of the tenancy. The court or arbitrator shall set a reasonable time for the tenant to vacate the premises.

Sec. 11. Section 13, chapter 186, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 59.20.180 are each amended to read as follows:

Within fourteen days after the termination of the rental agreement and vacation of the mobile home (~~tot~~) space, the landlord shall give a full and specific statement of the basis for retaining any of the deposit together with the payment of any refund due the tenant under the terms and conditions of the rental agreement. No portion of any deposit shall be withheld on account of wear resulting from ordinary use of the mobile home (~~tot~~) space.

The statement shall be delivered to the tenant personally or by mail to the last known address. If the landlord fails to give such statement together with any refund due the tenant within the time limits specified above such landlord shall be liable to the tenant for the full amount of the refund due. ~~((In any action brought by the tenant to recover the deposit, the prevailing party shall be entitled to the cost of suit or arbitration including a reasonable attorney's fee.))~~

Nothing in this chapter shall preclude the landlord from proceeding against, and the landlord shall have the right to proceed against a tenant to recover sums exceeding the amount of the tenant's damage or security deposit for damage to the property for which the tenant is responsible ~~((together with reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit)).~~

NEW SECTION. Sec. 12. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

The landlord and tenant may agree in writing to submit any dispute arising under this chapter or under the terms, conditions, or performance of the rental agreement to mediation by an independent third party or to settle the dispute through industry mediation procedures. The parties may agree to submit any dispute to mediation before exercising their right to arbitration under section 13 of this act.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 13. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

(1) The landlord and tenant may agree in writing to submit a controversy arising under this chapter to arbitration. The agreement shall contain the name of the arbitrator agreed upon by the parties or the process for selecting the arbitrator.

(2) The arbitration shall be administered under this chapter and chapter 7.04 RCW.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 14. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

(1) If the landlord and tenant agree to submit the matter to arbitration, the parties shall complete an application for arbitration and deliver it to the selected arbitrator.

(2) The arbitrator shall schedule a hearing to be held no later than ten days following receipt of the application.

(3) Reasonable notice of the hearings shall be given to the parties, who shall appear and be heard either in person, by counsel, or by other representative. Hearings shall be informal and the rules of evidence prevailing in judicial proceedings shall not be binding. Hearings may be public or private. The proceedings may be recorded. Any oral or documentary evidence and other data deemed relevant by the arbitrator may be received in evidence.

The arbitrator may administer oaths, issue subpoenas, and require the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, contracts, agreements, and documents deemed by the arbitrator to be material to a just determination of the issues in dispute. If a person refuses to obey a subpoena or refuses to be sworn to testify, or any witness, party, or attorney is guilty of any contempt while in attendance at any hearing held under this section, the arbitrator may invoke the jurisdiction of any district or superior court, and the court shall have jurisdiction to issue an appropriate order. Failure to obey the order may be punished by the court as contempt.

(4) Within five days after the hearing, the arbitrator shall make a written decision upon the issues presented. A copy of the decision shall be mailed by certified mail or otherwise delivered to the parties or their designated representatives. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding upon all parties.

(5) If a dispute exists affecting more than one tenant in a similar manner, the arbitrator may with the consent of the parties consolidate the cases into a single proceeding.

(6) Decisions of the arbitrator shall be enforced or appealed under chapter 7.04 RCW.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 15. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

The administrative fee for this arbitration procedure shall be established by agreement of the parties and the arbitrator and, unless otherwise allocated by the arbitrator, shall be shared equally by the parties. However, upon either party signing an affidavit to the effect that the party is unable to pay the share of the fee, that portion of the fee may be waived or deferred.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 16. There is added to chapter 59.20 RCW a new section to read as follows:

When a party gives notice of intent to arbitrate by giving reasonable notice to the other party, that party shall, at the same time, arrange for arbitration of the grievance in the manner provided for in this chapter. The arbitration shall be completed before the rental due date next occurring after the giving of notice under this section, but in no event shall the arbitrator have less than ten days to complete the arbitration process:

Sec. 17. Section 11, chapter 186, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 59.20.160 are each amended to read as follows:

If any moneys are paid to the landlord by the tenant as a deposit or as security for performance of the tenant's obligations in a written rental agreement, such rental agreement shall include the terms and conditions under which the deposit or portion thereof may be withheld by the landlord upon termination of the rental agreement. If all or part of the deposit may be withheld to indemnify the landlord for damages to the mobile home ((tot)) space for which the tenant is responsible, the rental agreement shall

so specify. It is unlawful to charge or collect a deposit or security for performance if the parties have not entered into a written rental agreement.

**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 18. If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

Passed the House February 1, 1984.

Passed the Senate February 22, 1984.

Approved by the Governor March 1, 1984.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 1, 1984.

## CHAPTER 59

[Engrossed House Bill No. 1361]

### LOW-INCOME RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS OF PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICTS— ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM—VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BY CUSTOMERS

AN ACT Relating to voluntary contributions to assist low-income utility customers; and adding a new chapter to Title 54 RCW.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 1. A public utility district may include along with, or as part of its regular customer billings, a request for voluntary contributions to assist qualified low-income residential customers of the district in paying their electricity bills. All funds received by the district in response to such requests shall be transmitted to the grantee of the planning and community affairs agency which administers federally funded energy assistance programs for the state in the district's service area or to a charitable organization within the district's service area. All such funds shall be used solely to supplement assistance to low-income residential customers of the district in paying their electricity bills. The grantee or charitable organization shall be responsible to determine which of the district's customers are qualified for low-income assistance and the amount of assistance to be provided to those who are qualified.

**NEW SECTION.** Sec. 2. All assistance provided under this chapter shall be disbursed by the grantee or charitable organization. Where possible the public utility district will be paid on behalf of the customer by the grantee or the charitable organization. When direct vendor payment is not feasible, a check will be issued jointly payable to the customer and the public utility district. The availability of funds for assistance to a district's low-income customers as a result of voluntary contributions shall not reduce the amount of assistance for which the district's customers are eligible under the federally funded energy assistance programs administered by the grantee of the planning and community affairs agency within the district's