
DIGEST

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HB 965 Engrossed

2024 Regular Session

Hilferty

Abstract: Provides relative to billing for services provided by the sewerage and water board of New Orleans.

Proposed law requires the sewerage and water board of New Orleans (the board) to present every residential customer with the option of paying a fixed monthly rate for services. Requires the board to notify each customer of the option for fixed rate billing and the amount he would pay each month. Provides that the fixed rate applies until an automated meter is installed and operable at his residence.

Proposed law provides for an arbitration program applicable to residential customers who dispute their bills. Requires the following with respect to the program:

- (1) The legislative auditor and the New Orleans inspector general shall appoint one arbiter for each councilmanic district in New Orleans, subject to confirmation by the city council.
- (2) If a customer disputes a monthly bill or the fixed monthly rate offered pursuant to proposed law, his case shall be referred to the arbiter for the councilmanic district in which his residence is located.
- (3) The arbiter shall meet with the customer in a private location in a public building within the councilmanic district and review all evidence available.
- (4) Based on his review, the arbiter shall determine whether the bill or fixed rate amount is appropriate and if not, what the appropriate amount or rate is.
- (5) If the arbiter determines that the appropriate bill or rate amount is lower than what has been submitted to the customer, he shall notify the board, and the board shall lower the amount or rate to that which the arbiter has determined is appropriate.
- (6) Provides that the customer may appeal the arbiter's determination to the city council as otherwise provided by present law.

(Adds R.S. 33:4159.3)