

---

## DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

---

HB 573 Original

2026 Regular Session

Hilferty

**Abstract:** Provides relative to the board composition, powers and duties, billing policies, and rates of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans.

Present law provides that the public water system, the public sewerage system, and the public drainage system of the city of New Orleans shall be constructed, controlled, maintained, and operated by a sewerage and water board to be composed as follows:

- (1) The mayor.
- (2) The chair of the Public Works, Sanitation and Environment Committee of the New Orleans city council or an appointee selected by the council president with a background in engineering, law, or consumer advocacy selected with the advice and consent of the city council.
- (3) Two syndicate members of the board of liquidation, city debt, to be appointed by the mayor on the recommendation of the board of liquidation, city debt.
- (4) Seven citizens, to be appointed by the mayor, with the advice and consent of the city council from a list of nominees submitted by the Sewerage and Water Board Selection Committee.

Present law provides for the composition of the Sewerage and Water Board Selection Committee. Provides for the filling of vacancies on the board.

Present law authorizes the board to adopt rules and procedures authorizing the adjusting, releasing, or extinguishing of any indebtedness from a customer's sewerage and water bill under certain circumstances.

Proposed law retains present law and additionally authorizes the governing authority of the city of New Orleans to adopt ordinances that conflict with the provisions of present law. Provides that if the provisions of an ordinance conflict with the provisions of present law and the provisions of the ordinance were adopted later than the provisions of present law were enacted, the provisions of the ordinance shall supercede the provisions of present law.

Present law provides that the mayor shall be ex officio president of the board. Requires the board to elect an executive director, whose salary and bond shall be fixed by the board. Provides that no member of the board shall receive any salary or compensation for his services, except actual

expenses incurred in traveling by authority of, or for the benefit of the board. Authorizes the board to elect one of its members president pro tempore who shall act in the absence or disability of the president.

Proposed law retains present law and additionally authorizes the governing authority of the city of New Orleans to adopt ordinances that conflict with the provisions of present law. Provides that if the provisions of an ordinance conflict with the provisions of present law and the provisions of the ordinance were adopted later than the provisions of present law were enacted, the provisions of the ordinance shall supercede the provisions of present law.

Present law requires the board to fix the rates to be charged users of the sewerage system, and to collect the same from all persons who use the sewerage system. Exempts the city of New Orleans and its public institutions from which no revenue is derived. Additionally exempts certain accounts of the Orleans Parish School Board.

Present law provides that the rates to be charged the users of the sewerage system shall not become effective unless and until approved by the Board of Liquidation, City Debt, and by the council of the city of New Orleans. Requires that the rates be equal and uniform for each grade or class of customers.

Present law authorizes the board to issue bonds payable solely out of revenues derived from sewerage service charges for purposes relating to the sewerage system of the city including the refunding of bonds. Provides further with respect to such bonds.

Proposed law retains present law and authorizes the governing authority of the city of New Orleans to establish alternative procedures for rate approval. Further authorizes the governing authority of the city of New Orleans to adopt ordinances that conflict with the provisions of present law. Provides that if the provisions of an ordinance conflict with the provisions of present law and the provisions of the ordinance were adopted later than the provisions of present law were enacted, the provisions of the ordinance shall supercede the provisions of present law.

Present law authorizes the New Orleans city council to establish, by ordinance, procedures regarding the billing policies of the board, including reducing or modifying a bill received by a customer, or waiving late charges or accrued interest. Requires that the procedures established by the city council be uniformly implemented so as to prevent special treatment as it relates to any bill modification or amnesty.

Proposed law retains present law and additionally authorizes the governing authority of the city of New Orleans to adopt ordinances that conflict with the provisions of present law. Provides that if the provisions of an ordinance conflict with the provisions of present law and the provisions of the ordinance were adopted later than present law was enacted, the provisions of the ordinance shall supercede the provisions of present law.

Present law requires the city council to establish a billing ordinance working group to review and opine on ordinances before any such ordinance may be considered by the Public Works, Sanitation,

and Environmental Committee of the city council, including evaluating the necessity of such an ordinance. Provides that the working group shall be composed as follows:

- (1) The chairman of the New Orleans City Council Budget, Audit, and Board of Review Committee, or his designee.
- (2) The chairman of the New Orleans City Council Public Works, Sanitation, and Environment Committee, or his designee.
- (3) The chairman of the New Orleans City Council Governmental Affairs Committee, or his designee.
- (4) A member of the House of Representatives residing in Orleans Parish, or his designee, appointed by the New Orleans City Council president.
- (5) A member of the Senate residing in Orleans Parish, or his designee, appointed by the New Orleans City Council president.
- (6) The executive director of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, or his designee.
- (7) The president of the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, or his designee.

Proposed law removes present law.

Present law authorizes the city council to open an investigation of the board after the occurrence of any catastrophic failure of the city's sewerage and drainage infrastructure. Provides that a catastrophic failure shall be defined as an impact to board-owned-and-operated equipment or assets that result in a diminished level of service to more than 10,000 customers and an emergency declaration by the board's general superintendent. Requires that any information regarding such a failure requested in writing from the board by the city council shall be submitted to the council not later 30 days after receipt of the written request. Authorizes the city council to request the attendance of a representative of the board at any meeting of the Public Works, Sanitation, and Environment Committee of the city council.

Proposed law retains present law and additionally authorizes the governing authority of the city of New Orleans to adopt ordinances that conflict with the provisions of present law. Provides that if the provisions of an ordinance conflict with the provisions of present law and the provisions of the ordinance were adopted later than present law was enacted, the provisions of the ordinance shall supercede the provisions of present law.

(Amends R.S. 33:4073 and 4159.2(A); Adds R.S. 33:4071(G), 4121(A)(4) and (K), and 4159.2(D))