

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION directing the Public Service Commission to explore
2 measures that would address affordability and the provision of essential utility services
3 and declaring an emergency.

4 WHEREAS, access to essential utility services, including electric, water, and sewer,
5 are necessary to light, heat, and clean the home, and fundamental for the health, safety,
6 and well-being of all Kentuckians; and

7 WHEREAS, due to affordability challenges, individuals and households with low
8 and fixed incomes face significant barriers to maintaining consistent access to essential
9 utility services due to affordability challenges; and

10 WHEREAS, various utilities, especially those serving disadvantaged communities
11 in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, struggle to meet their basic revenue requirements
12 while keeping rates affordable for their customers; and

13 WHEREAS, many individuals and households with low and fixed incomes often
14 face disconnection from their utility services due to inability to pay their bill; and

15 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth has an interest in ensuring that utility services are
16 provided in a manner that is equitable, just, and consistent with the public interest; and

17 WHEREAS, the Public Service Commission, as the regulatory body charged with
18 oversight of jurisdictional utilities, is uniquely positioned to explore innovative and
19 effective measures to address affordability, and ensure the ongoing provision of essential
20 utility services to vulnerable populations; and

21 WHEREAS, the General Assembly notes and reaffirms that the commission's
22 jurisdiction over fair, just, and reasonable rates includes consideration of the affordability
23 of utility service; and

24 WHEREAS, creating a dedicated space to examine these issues will allow for
25 meaningful engagement with stakeholders, including jurisdictional utilities and consumer
26 advocates to bring forward sustainable solutions;

27 NOW, THEREFORE,

1 ***Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

2 ➔Section 1. The Public Service Commission is hereby directed to open one or
3 more administrative cases to investigate and identify measures utilities can use to
4 improve the affordability of utility service for low- and fixed-income individuals.

5 ➔Section 2. The Public Service Commission shall invite and encourage
6 participation in the administrative case or cases from electric, water, and wastewater
7 utilities to become parties to the administrative case, and engage with affected
8 communities and nonprofit advocacy organizations to ensure broad and representative
9 participation in both formal and informal proceedings and to inform the development of
10 recommendations.

11 ➔Section 3. The administrative case or cases shall:

12 (1) Examine strategies to provide consistent access to utility service for low and
13 fixed-income customers;

14 (2) Examine strategies to protect consumers from payment delinquencies, late
15 fees, and disconnections that could threaten their health, safety, and well-being; and

16 (3) Evaluate potential solutions to address affordability such as rate design,
17 financial assistance programs, water and wastewater utility regionalization, and other
18 regulatory and nonregulatory approaches and innovations.

19 ➔Section 4. The Public Service Commission shall report to the Legislative
20 Research Commission no later than September 1, 2027, summarizing the findings and
21 recommendations arising from the administrative case or cases and identifying specific
22 measures that can be implemented by the General Assembly, the Public Service
23 commission, and various utilities to address affordability and disconnection.

24 ➔Section 5. Whereas the steady increase in electricity and anticipated reduction
25 in 2027-2028 funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
26 threatens the health and safety of vulnerable low- and fixed-income citizens, an
27 emergency is declared to exist, and this Joint Resolution shall take effect upon its passage

1 and approval by the Governor or upon its otherwise becoming a law.