

2017 SESSION

LEGISLATION NOT PREPARED BY DLS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 1658

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 5, 2017

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 56-245.1:3, relating to electric utility customer account information.*

Patron—Marshall, R.G.

Referred to Committee on Commerce and Labor

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 56-245.1:3 as follows:

§ 56-245.1:3. *Electric utility customer account information confidential.*

A. For purposes of this section:

"Customer account information" means the customer's name, social security number, address, telephone number, or other identifying information; and the electric utility service account information related to such customer, including records of billing to and payment from such customer.

"Electric utility" has the same meaning as provided in § 56-576.

B. An electric utility or any officer, agent, or employee of such electric utility, or for any other person such electric utility authorizes to receive customer account information in connection with any business of the electric utility, shall not without the consent of such customer knowingly disclose any customer account information to any person other than (i) the customer, his agent or any other person such customer authorizes to receive such information; (ii) the electric utility or any officer, agent, or employee of such electric utility, or for any other person authorized by such electric utility to receive customer account information in connection with any business of the electric utility; (iii) third parties providing the electric utility with debt collection services or purchasing delinquent account payables; or (iv) as may be reasonably disclosed or used in proceedings between the electric utility and the customer.

C. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the disclosure of such customer account information in response to any legal process issued under the authority of any court, or to any officer or agent of the government of the United States or of any state, territory, or district thereof, in the exercise of his power, or to any officer or other duly authorized person seeking such information for the prosecution of persons charged with or suspected of crimes. In any such legal process seeking customer account information, the court, or government officer or agent, shall preserve the confidentiality of customer account information by reasonable means, which may include:

1. Granting protective orders in connection with proceedings;

2. Holding in-camera hearings;

3. Sealing the records of the action; and

4. Ordering any person involved in the litigation not to disclose such customer account information without prior court approval.

D. Notwithstanding the other provisions of this section, an electric utility may release customer account information that has been transformed into a statistical or aggregate form that does not allow the identification of a particular customer.

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