

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2016 SESSION

CHAPTER 283

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 12.1-30.1 and 56-237.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the regulation of water and sewer utilities.

[H 611]

Approved March 7, 2016

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 12.1-30.1 and 56-237.1 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 12.1-30.1. Meetings and communications between commissioners and parties or staff.

The Commission shall after public hearing, promulgate rules of practice and procedure pursuant to § 12.1-25 controlling meetings and communications between commissioners and any party, or between commissioners and staff concerning any fact or issue arising out of a proceeding involving the regulation of rates, charges, services or facilities of railroad, telephone, gas, electric, *water, or sewer* companies. The rules shall provide, among other provisions, that no commissioner shall consult with any party or any person acting on behalf of any party with respect to such proceeding without giving adequate notice and opportunity for all parties to participate.

§ 56-237.1. Notification of intent to seek rate change in schedules required to be filed under § 56-236.

A. Every public utility ~~which~~, *other than a public utility providing water or sewer service, that* indicates upon existing required schedules, or upon new schedules required to be filed in lieu thereof, changes in rates, tolls, charges, rules and regulations, shall cause to have published, once a week for four successive weeks, in one or more newspapers in circulation in its franchise area and approved by the Commission, a notice of its intention to change its rates, tolls, charges, rules and regulations. *Every public utility providing water or sewer service that indicates upon existing required schedules, or upon new schedules required to be filed in lieu thereof, changes in rates, tolls, charges, rules and regulations, shall cause to have published at least once in one or more newspapers in circulation in its franchise area and approved by the Commission, a notice of its intention to change its rates, tolls, charges, rules and regulations.* The last such publication shall appear no less than 30 days prior to the time any changed rates, tolls, charges, rules and regulations shall take effect. This notice shall be in such form and contain such information as prescribed by the Commission.

B. Every public utility ~~which~~ *that* indicates upon existing required schedules, or upon new schedules required to be filed in lieu thereof, changes in rates, tolls, charges, rules, and regulations, shall mail to each of its customers *who receive periodic statements of charges by mail or send electronically to each of its customers who receive periodic statements of charges electronically*, along with its periodic invoice, bill, or other statement advising the customer of its charges, a notice of its intention to change its rates, tolls, charges, rules, and regulations. This notice shall be mailed *or sent electronically* no less than 30 days prior to the time any such changed rate, toll, charge, rule, and regulation shall take effect. This notice shall be in such form and contain such information as prescribed by the Commission.

C. ~~The~~ *Except for public utilities providing water or sewer service, the* Commission may dispense with either or both of the requirements contained in subsections A and B if either or both such requirements are not necessary to provide adequate notice to all of the public utilities' customers. The Commission may prescribe additional requirements for notification to a public utility's customers of its intention to change its rates, tolls, charges, rules, and regulations.