

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Public Utilities Commission Operations

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Overview

H. F. 359 makes changes in the way the five member Public Utilities Commission can perform its assigned work. The authority granted to the commission to adopt new processes to do its work would sunset on June 30, 2002.

- 1** Authorizes the commission to approve certain filings with the commission without taking formal action except publicizing notice of the approval. Any person can object to the process and if an objection is made within 60 days of filing, the filing cannot be approved by this process. Complaint filings and rule making petitions are not eligible for approval under this process. The commission may designate certain other types of filings as eligible for the approval process.
- 2** Authorizes the commission to designate a lead commissioner for a docket, a type of docket, or for a particular subject area. Prior to making a designation for a particular docket, a party or participant may request that a lead commissioner not be designated for that docket. If designated, the lead commissioner may develop a record and preside at hearings without the involvement of any other commissioner. The lead commissioner is not authorized to issue binding commission decisions. Any findings of fact, conclusions of law, or recommendations of the lead commissioner are advisory only and a final decision by the commission is required. Even if a lead commissioner is designated, a contested case hearing can still be requested pursuant to chapter 14.
- 3** Sunsets the authority granted by the bill on June 30, 2002.
- 4** Provides an immediate effective date for the entire bill.