**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND ARTICLE 1, CHAPTER 3, TITLE 58 OF THE 1976 CODE, BY ADDING SECTION 58‑3‑143 TO ESTABLISH A PROCEDURE BY WHICH A PUBLIC UTILITY PROVIDING WATER, SEWERAGE, OR SEWERAGE DISPOSAL SERVICES TO LESS THAN 1500 CUSTOMERS LOCATED IN ONE COUNTY MUST SUBMIT A RATE INCREASE REQUEST TO THE COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 1, Chapter 3, Title 58 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 58‑3‑143. (A) Notwithstanding any other provision of this article, any public utility providing water, sewerage, or sewerage disposal services or any combination of these services to less than 1500 customers all located within one county must, prior to submitting a rate increase request, submit the request and supporting materials to the legislative delegation of the county in which the services are provided. The legislative delegation must review the request and supporting materials and prepare a report on its findings as to whether or not the request is fair and reasonable given the specific economic circumstances of the population served by the public utility.

(B) The report must be submitted by the public utility as part of its rate increase request pursuant to the requirements of this chapter.

(C) A finding by the legislative delegation that the request is not fair and reasonable creates a presumption that the request should be denied by the commission unless the public utility proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the request is fair and reasonable and denial of the request would result in a disruption of services to the customers.

(D) The requirements of this section are binding upon a public utility upon notification by the legislative delegation that it has voted to exercise the authority granted by this section.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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