

LEGISLATIVE BILL 804

Approved by the Governor April 18, 2022

Introduced by Hughes, 44.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to the Nebraska Power Review Board; to amend section 70-1003, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2020; to change the compensation for certain board members as prescribed; and to repeal the original section.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 70-1003, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2020, is amended to read:

70-1003 (1) There is hereby established an independent board to be known as the Nebraska Power Review Board to consist of five members, one of whom shall be an engineer, one an attorney, one an accountant, and two laypersons. No person who is or who has within four years preceding his or her appointment been either a director, officer, or employee of any electric utility or an elective state officer shall be eligible for membership on the board. Members of the board shall be appointed by the Governor subject to the approval of the Legislature. Upon expiration of the terms of the members first appointed, the successors shall be appointed for terms of four years. No member of the board shall serve more than two consecutive terms. Any vacancy on the board arising other than from the expiration of a term shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired portion of the term, and any person appointed to fill a vacancy on the board shall be eligible for reappointment for two more consecutive terms. No more than three members of the board shall be registered members of that political party represented by the Governor.

(2) Each member of the board shall receive sixty dollars per day for each day actually and necessarily engaged in the performance of his or her duties, but not to exceed six thousand dollars in any one year, except for the member designated to represent the board on the Southwest Power Pool Regional State Committee or its equivalent successor, who shall receive two hundred fifty dollars for each day actually and necessarily engaged in the performance of his or her duties, not to exceed ~~thirty-five~~ ~~twenty~~ thousand dollars in any one year. If the member designated to represent the board on the Southwest Power Pool Regional State Committee should for any reason no longer serve in that capacity during a year, the pay received while serving in such capacity shall not be used for purposes of calculating the six-thousand-dollar limitation for board members not serving in that capacity. When another board member acts as the proxy for the designated Southwest Power Pool Regional State Committee member, he or she shall receive the same pay as the designated member would have for that activity. Pay received while serving as proxy for such designated member shall not be used for purposes of determining whether the six-thousand-dollar limitation has been met for board members not serving as such designated member. Total pay to board members for activities related to the Southwest Power Pool shall not exceed an aggregate total of ~~forty~~ ~~twenty-five~~ thousand dollars in any one year. Each member shall be reimbursed for expenses while so engaged as provided in sections 81-1174 to 81-1177. The board shall have jurisdiction as provided in Chapter 70, article 10.

(3) The board shall elect from their members a chairperson and a vice-chairperson. Decisions of the board shall require the approval of a majority of the members of the board.

(4) The board shall employ an executive director and may employ such other staff necessary to carry out the duties pursuant to Chapter 70, article 10. The executive director shall serve at the pleasure of the board and shall be solely responsible to the board. The executive director shall be responsible for the administrative operations of the board and shall perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him or her by the board. The board may obtain the services of experts and consultants necessary to carry out the board's duties pursuant to Chapter 70, article 10.

(5) The board shall publish and submit a biennial report with annual data to the Governor, with copies to be filed with the Clerk of the Legislature and with the Department of Environment and Energy. The report submitted to the Clerk of the Legislature shall be submitted electronically. The department shall consider the information in the Nebraska Power Review Board's report when the department prepares its own reports pursuant to sections 81-1606 and 81-1607. The report of the board shall include:

(a) The assessments for the fiscal year imposed pursuant to section 70-1020;

(b) The gross income totals for each category of the industry and the industry total;

(c) The number of suppliers against whom the assessment is levied, by category and in total;

(d) The projected dollar costs of generation, transmission, and microwave applications, approved and denied;

(e) The actual dollar costs of approved applications upon completion, and a summary of an informational hearing concerning any significant divergence

between the projected and actual costs;

(f) A description of Nebraska's current electric system and information on additions to and retirements from the system during the fiscal year, including microwave facilities;

(g) A statistical summary of board activities and an expenditure summary;

(h) A roster of power suppliers in Nebraska and the assessment each paid;

and

(i) Appropriately detailed historical and projected electric supply and demand statistics, including information on the total generating capacity owned by Nebraska suppliers and the total peak load demand of the previous year, along with an indication of how the industry will respond to the projected situation.

(6) The board may, in its discretion, hold public hearings concerning the conditions that may indicate that retail competition in the electric industry would benefit Nebraska's citizens and what steps, if any, should be taken to prepare for retail competition in Nebraska's electricity market. In determining whether to hold such hearings, the board shall consider the sufficiency of public interest.

(7) The board may, at any time deemed beneficial by the board, submit a report to the Governor with copies to be filed with the Clerk of the Legislature and the Natural Resources Committee of the Legislature. The report filed with the Clerk of the Legislature and the committee shall be filed electronically. The report may include:

(a) Whether or not a viable regional transmission organization and adequate transmission exist in Nebraska or in a region which includes Nebraska;

(b) Whether or not a viable wholesale electricity market exists in a region which includes Nebraska;

(c) To what extent retail rates have been unbundled in Nebraska;

(d) A comparison of Nebraska's wholesale electricity prices to the prices in the region; and

(e) Any other information the board believes to be beneficial to the Governor, the Legislature, and Nebraska's citizens when considering whether retail electric competition would be beneficial, such as, but not limited to, an update on deregulation activities in other states and an update on federal deregulation legislation.

(8) The board may establish working groups of interested parties to assist the board in carrying out the powers set forth in subsections (6) and (7) of this section.

Sec. 2. Original section 70-1003, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2020, is repealed.