CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2003–04 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL No. 2803

Introduced by Assembly Member Jerome Horton

February 20, 2004

An act to add Sections 309.4 to the Public Utilities Code, relating to the Public Utilities Commission.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2803, as introduced, Jerome Horton. Public Utilities Commission: Office of Economic Development.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities. Existing law establishes a division within the Public Utilities Commission, known as the Office of Ratepayer Advocates, to represent the interests of public utility customers and subscribers, with the goal of obtaining the lowest possible rate for service consistent with reliable and safe service levels.

This bill would establish the Office of Economic Development as a division within the commission to review and assess the beneficial and adverse economic impacts, as defined, intended and unintended, of commission decisions and orders in commission proceeding. The goal of the office would be to assist the commission in making decisions that will promote economic development and to avoid making decisions that will suppress economic development.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 309.4 is added to the Public Utilities Code, to read:

309.4. (a) There shall be established within the commission, a division named the Office of Economic Development, which shall review and assess the beneficial and adverse economic impacts, intended and unintended, of commission decisions and orders in commission proceedings. The goal of the Office of Economic Development is to assist the commission in making decisions that will promote economic development and to avoid making decisions that will suppress economic development.

(b) For purposes of this section:

(1) ‘‘Adverse economic impacts’’ includes increasing costs, raising prices, loss of jobs or employment opportunities, reducing technological innovation or investment in technological innovation, reducing investment in infrastructure to serve consumers, and reducing consumer choices and options.

(2) ‘‘Beneficial economic impacts’’ include increased efficiency, reduced costs, reduced prices, technological innovation, increased employment, increased consumer choices, and increased information reasonably available to consumers to make informed choices.

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