



Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

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Summary HB 1991 PN 3748

This legislation amends the Energy Conservation and Assistance Act to improve oversight in the weatherization program operated by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and in the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) operated by the Department of Public Welfare (DPW).

Both Departments are required to verify income eligibility of applicants for these energy assistance programs through the verification procedures established in the Public Welfare Code. The Public Welfare Code verification system is a computerized system which matches the social security number of each applicant to a number of different databases for the purposes of determining income and other aspects of eligibility such as employment and citizenship.

HB 1991 requires DCED and DPW to jointly report to the legislature, every six months from the effective date and until such time as the income eligibility process is fully operational, on the progress of implementation. It also provides protections for those required to report fraud to the Office of Inspector General and requires DCED and DPW to develop conflict of interest policies. DCED is charged with evaluating subgrantee performance and determining whether funds may be more effectively utilized by other subgrantees.

The Auditor General is required to conduct a performance audit of the energy assistance programs within five years of the effective date of the act and then at intervals not greater than every five years from the immediately preceding audit. The audit shall address administrative and regulatory activities and any deficiencies. The audit results shall be shared with DPW, DCED, the Governor, the Attorney General, the Office of Inspector General and the chairman and minority chairman of the following legislative committees: Appropriations, Health, and Public Health and Welfare. A copy of the audit shall also be published in the PA Bulletin.

Lastly, the duties of the Governor's Energy Council to fulfill federally mandated duties regarding the State Energy Conservation Plan are moved to the Department of Environmental Protection.

Effective Date

This act shall take effect immediately.

Amendment A13569

This amendment makes technical and clarifying changes as well as deletes provisions that are no longer applicable. It extends the statutory requirement of developing a conflict of interest policy to the Department of Public Welfare and adds a good faith requirement for the reporting of fraud. It also stipulates that the Statewide Weatherization and Energy Conservation Policy Council membership shall be in accordance with federal law.