

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, LABOR AND ENERGY**

**Seventy-Eighth Session
February 27, 2015**

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Labor and Energy was called to order by Chair James A. Settelmeyer at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, February 27, 2015, in Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator James A. Settelmeyer, Chair
Senator Patricia Farley, Vice Chair
Senator Joe P. Hardy
Senator Becky Harris
Senator Mark A. Manendo
Senator Kelvin Atkinson
Senator Pat Spearman

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marji Paslov Thomas, Policy Analyst
Dan Yu, Counsel
Christine Miner, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Garrett Weir, Assistant General Counsel, Public Utilities Commission of Nevada
Dan Jacobsen, Technical Staff Manager, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Office
of the Attorney General

Chair Settelmeyer:

I will open the work session on Senate Bill (S.B.) 24.

SENATE BILL 24: Revises provisions governing unemployment compensation.
(BDR 53-383)

Marji Paslov Thomas (Policy Analyst):

I will read the summary of the bill and the amendments from the work session document ([Exhibit C](#)).

Senator Hardy:

If the wages of a member of the Nevada National Guard are used to establish an unemployment claim, is that member currently receiving wages from the National Guard?

Chair Settlemeyer:

The National Guard members are without employment. The bill is intended to help them once they leave the National Guard and while seeking employment. I will entertain a motion.

SENATOR HARDY MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 24.

SENATOR SPEARMAN SECONDED THE MOTION.

Senator Spearman:

The National Guard belongs to the State and once the Guard members are no longer on active duty, many of them return to a jobless situation. This bill is designed to ensure an immediate income for them.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Chair Settlemeyer:

I will open the work session on S.B. 68.

SENATE BILL 68: Revises provisions governing professions. (BDR 54-290)

Ms. Paslov Thomas:

I will read the summary of the bill and the amendments from the work session document ([Exhibit D](#)).

Chair Settlemeyer:

The critical shortage of medical professionals in Nevada prompted the initiation of S.B. 68. Only the medical professions experiencing critical shortages are included in the amendment. I will entertain a motion.

SENATOR HARDY MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 68.

SENATOR MANENDO SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Chair Settlemeyer:

I have pulled S.B. 113 from today's work session.

SENATE BILL 113: Revises provisions relating to insurance. (BDR 57-690)

Chair Settlemeyer:

I will open the work session on S.B. 151.

SENATE BILL 151: Requires the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada to adopt regulations authorizing a natural gas utility to expand its infrastructure in a manner consistent with a program of economic development. (BDR 58-52)

Ms. Paslov Thomas

I will read the summary of the bill and the amendments from the work session document ([Exhibit E](#)).

Chair Settlemeyer:

I will entertain a motion on S.B. 151.

SENATOR MANENDO MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 151.

SENATOR HARRIS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Chair Settlemeyer:

I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 75.

ASSEMBLY BILL 75: Revises provisions governing certain proposed changes in the schedule of rates or services of a public utility. (BDR 58-351)

Garrett Weir (Assistant General Counsel, Public Utilities Commission of Nevada):

The intent of A.B. 75 is to improve efficiency and to streamline government. It changes the threshold amount of revenue increase that a utility company can experience as a result of a filing made via an advice letter with the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (PUCN). The threshold amount of \$2,500 was adopted in 1971. We are proposing to adjust for inflation and change that amount to \$15,000. The bill includes provisions to require utility companies to certify that the revenue increase will remain below \$15,000.

An advice letter is a filing that can be made with the PUCN to change provisions of a tariff of a utility company. The tariff governs the terms and conditions of service for utility customers. An advice letter allows the utility company to make minor changes to the tariff without going through the full rate case application process, including voluminous supporting materials, consumer sessions, testimony and a hearing. The purpose of the advice letter is to simplify the process for making minor changes that do not have a significant rate impact on the customer. The PUCN must review and approve the request. Public notices are still required. A hearing can be set when circumstances require it. Adjusting the cap will fulfill the original purpose of the bill and provide cost savings to the PUCN, the utility companies and the customer.

Senator Hardy:

Was the original intent of the bill changed?

Mr. Weir:

The original intent is better accomplished by expanding the threshold amount.

Senator Hardy:

Is the original intent in the bill?

Mr. Weir:

I misspoke. I meant to say the bill changes the original amount in statute. Assembly Bill 75 is the original bill.

Dan Jacobsen (Technical Staff Manager, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Office of the Attorney General):

The Bureau of Consumer Protection supports A.B. 75. There are circumstances where a minor rate increase does not warrant a hearing. If a minor increase is controversial, the PUCN could agree to a hearing. This bill will improve efficiency.

Senator Harris:

With this procedure, is there opportunity for the public to comment on a rate increase?

Mr. Jacobsen:

Yes. When a utility company requests a rate change, via an advice letter, it is posted, and members of the public can attend any of the PUCN agenda meetings or contact the Commission staff and register their concerns.

Senator Harris:

Would a member of the public be allowed to testify at a hearing or only as a witness to the proceeding?

Mr. Jacobsen:

The Commission has public agenda meetings twice monthly where any member of the public can comment. The public agenda meeting is the opportunity for a member of the public to voice a concern about a price change happening via an advice letter. The rate change through the application process has its own sets of hearings, and that is a different situation.

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Chair Settlemeyer:

Hearing no further discussion, I will close the hearing on A.B. 75. I adjourn the meeting at 8:48 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Christine Miner,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator James A. Settlemeyer, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit		Witness or Agency	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	4		Attendance Roster
S.B. 24	C	7	Marji Paslov Thomas	Work Session Document
S.B. 68	D	6	Marji Paslov Thomas	Work Session Document
S.B. 151	E	2	Marji Paslov Thomas	Work Session Document