

Utility Bill Would Add New County Role in Municipal Service Expansion Talks

[HB 1451](#) – Rep. Demi Busatta (SB 1724 – Sen. Jonathan Martin)

General Bill Summary

CS/CS/HB 1451 passed both chambers and was ordered engrossed and enrolled on March 13, 2026. The bill revises how municipalities provide retail electric, natural gas, water, and sewer service outside their boundaries. It requires a written agreement before a municipality can begin, extend, renew, or materially amend utility service in another municipality or an unincorporated area, and it requires public meetings in each affected jurisdiction before those agreements take effect. Those meetings must address service changes, proposed rates and differentials, and whether utility revenues will support nonutility government functions. The bill also requires annual public customer meetings in affected service areas. For water and sewer service, it caps outside-city rates at no more than 25 percent above inside-city rates, and in a narrow circumstance involving treatment plants located in another municipality, it limits rates to the same amount charged inside the serving municipality. It also creates annual municipal reporting to the Florida Public Service Commission and preempts to the state the subject of certain regional utilities authorities created after January 1, 2023.

Potential County Impact

Counties would have a more formal role when a municipality proposes to provide or change covered utility service in unincorporated areas. Before a new, extended, renewed, or materially amended agreement can take effect, the board of county commissioners in the affected unincorporated area must participate in a public meeting with the serving municipality's appointed representative. That gives counties a clearer forum to raise concerns about service levels, rates, customer impacts, and the extent to which utility revenues may subsidize nonutility municipal operations. Counties may also see stronger constituent expectations to participate in annual public customer meetings for unincorporated customers served by municipal utilities. Fiscal effects on counties are indirect, but the House analysis notes the bill may have an indeterminate negative effect on local government revenues and expenditures. For counties that rely on coordination with municipal utilities, the bill could increase intergovernmental meeting, review, and public engagement responsibilities. The state preemption language may also limit future local flexibility if a regional utilities authority is pursued through post-2023 charter amendment legislation.

Effective Date

Most of the bill would take effect July 1, 2027. New s. 180.192, F.S. would take effect July 1, 2026. The preemption section would take effect upon becoming a law.

Primary Statutory References

- s. 180.19, F.S.
- s. 180.191, F.S.
- s. 180.192, F.S.