

Assembly Bill No. 777

CHAPTER 709

An act to add Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 8410) to Division 4.1 of the Public Utilities Code, and to add Section 18917.2 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

[Approved by Governor October 13, 2025. Filed with Secretary
of State October 13, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 777, Celeste Rodriguez. Food assistance: disasters: utilities.

Existing federal law provides for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh, under which supplemental nutrition assistance benefits allocated to the state by the federal government are distributed to eligible individuals by each county. Existing federal law, through the federal Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP), provides for short-term food assistance benefits to families suffering in the wake of a major disaster. Existing law requires the State Department of Social Services and the county human services agency, if the President of the United States issues a major disaster declaration for individual assistance, to request to operate D-SNAP for the regions affected by the major disaster. Existing uncoded law, in the event of a declaration by the Governor or the President of the United States of a major disaster, continuously appropriates to the department from the General Fund an amount necessary to cover specified costs relating to the administration of disaster food assistance services, but not to exceed \$300,000 per disaster declaration.

Existing law vests the Public Utilities Commission with regulatory authority over public utilities, including electrical corporations, while local publicly owned electric utilities are under the direction of their governing boards. Under existing law, a violation of any order, decision, rule, direction, demand, or requirement of the commission is a crime.

This bill would authorize the commission and the governing boards of local publicly owned electric utilities to establish any memoranda of understanding or other agreements necessary to direct electrical corporations and local publicly owned electric utilities to timely provide data to the department to maximize food assistance, as provided. The bill would require electrical corporations and local publicly owned electric utilities to make a reasonable effort to provide aggregated customer outage data, for outages of 4 hours or longer, within 7 calendar days of a request from the department, as specified. The bill would require the department to maximize the amount of assistance requested and received through D-SNAP and all other federally funded nutrition assistance, including utilizing that provided utility data, in

order to timely seek automated mass replacement of specified federally funded nutrition assistance programs. The bill would require the department, on or before December 31, 2026, to submit a report to the Legislature related to food assistance, as specified.

This bill would require electrical corporations and local publicly owned electric utilities to have a point of contact for the department as necessary to provide the requested data. The bill would require the commission to provide technical assistance to the department, including technical assistance to support the above-described report. Because a violation of a commission action implementing the bill's requirements would be a crime, and by imposing additional duties on local publicly owned electric utilities, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for specified reasons.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 8410) is added to Division 4.1 of the Public Utilities Code, to read:

CHAPTER 10. INFORMATION SHARING

8410. For purposes of this chapter, all of the following definitions apply:

(a) "Electrical corporation" has the same meaning as defined in Section 218.

(b) "Local publicly owned electric utility" has the same meaning as defined in Section 224.3.

8411. (a) (1) The commission, as it deems necessary for the exchange of aggregated data, may establish any memoranda of understanding or other agreements necessary to direct electrical corporations to timely provide data to the State Department of Social Services to maximize the food assistance available pursuant to Section 18917.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(2) The data provided pursuant to the memoranda of understanding or other agreements shall meet, at minimum, all of the following requirements and prohibitions:

(A) The provided data shall be limited to only the aggregated customer outage data at the ZIP Code level that is necessary for the State Department of Social Services to maximize food assistance in an emergency, and shall not include any personally identifiable information.

(B) The provided data shall not be used for any purposes other than those specified in this section and Section 18917.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(C) The provided data shall be subject to all applicable privacy laws.

(b) (1) Notwithstanding any other law, or the execution of any memoranda of understanding or other agreements, each electrical corporation shall, within seven calendar days, make a reasonable effort to provide aggregated customer outage data, for outages of four hours or longer, in response to a request for data by the State Department of Social Services in order to maximize the food assistance available pursuant to Section 18917.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(2) Data provided to the State Department of Social Services shall meet, at minimum, all of the following requirements and prohibitions:

(A) The provided data shall be limited to only the aggregated customer outage data at the ZIP Code level that is necessary for the State Department of Social Services to maximize food assistance in an emergency, and shall not include any personally identifiable information.

(B) The provided data shall include, but not be limited to, the dates of power outages, duration in hours of power outages, the counties affected by power outages, the ZIP Codes affected by power outages, and, for each affected ZIP Code, the total number of residential customers in the ZIP Code and the total number of residential customers who lost electrical service during the power outages.

(C) The provided data shall not be used for any purposes other than those specified in this section and Section 18917.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(D) The provided data shall be subject to all applicable privacy laws.

(c) Each electrical corporation shall have a dedicated point of contact for the State Department of Social Services necessary to provide the data requested pursuant to subdivisions (a) and (b).

(d) The commission shall provide technical assistance to the State Department of Social Services, including, but not limited to, technical assistance to support the report described in Section 18917.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

8412. (a) (1) The governing board of each local publicly owned electric utility, as it deems necessary for the exchange of aggregated data, may establish any memoranda of understanding or other agreements necessary to direct the local publicly owned electric utility to timely provide data to the State Department of Social Services to maximize the food assistance available pursuant to Section 18917.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(2) The data provided pursuant to the memoranda of understanding or other agreements shall meet, at minimum, all of the following requirements and prohibitions:

(A) The provided data shall be limited to only the aggregated customer outage data at the ZIP Code level that is necessary for the State Department of Social Services to maximize food assistance in an emergency, and shall not include any personally identifiable information.

(B) The provided data shall not be used for any purposes other than those specified in this section and Section 18917.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(C) The provided data shall be subject to all applicable privacy laws.

(b) (1) Notwithstanding any other law or the execution of any memoranda of understanding or other agreements, each local publicly owned electric utility shall, within seven calendar days, make a reasonable effort to provide aggregated customer outage data, for outages of four hours or longer, in response to a request for data by the State Department of Social Services in order to maximize the food assistance available pursuant to Section 18917.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(2) Data provided to the State Department of Social Services shall meet, at minimum, all of the following requirements and prohibitions:

(A) The provided data shall be limited to only the aggregated customer outage data at the ZIP Code level that is necessary for the State Department of Social Services to maximize food assistance in an emergency, and shall not include any personally identifiable information.

(B) The provided data shall include, but not be limited to, the dates of power outages, duration in hours of power outages, the counties affected by power outages, the ZIP Codes affected by power outages, and, for each affected ZIP Code, the total number of residential customers in the ZIP Code and the total number of residential customers who lost electrical service during power outages.

(C) The provided data shall not be used for any purposes other than those specified in this section and Section 18917.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(D) The provided data shall be subject to all applicable privacy laws.

(c) Each local publicly owned electric utility shall designate a point of contact for the State Department of Social Services necessary to provide the data requested pursuant to subdivisions (a) and (b).

(d) The State Department of Social Services shall notify each local publicly owned electric utility of any changes to the federal requirements in a timely manner.

SEC. 2. Section 18917.2 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

18917.2. (a) The State Department of Social Services shall maximize the amount of assistance requested and received through the federal Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP), and all other federally funded nutrition assistance programs, including utilizing necessary data, provided in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 8410) of Division 4.1 of the Public Utilities Code, in order for the department to timely seek automated mass replacement of SNAP benefits, D-SNAP, the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children (Summer EBT) program, known in California as SUN Bucks, and any other federally funded nutrition assistance programs.

(b) The department shall maintain contact with each electrical corporation and local publicly owned electric utility in accordance with Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 8410) of Division 4.1 of the Public Utilities Code.

(c) (1) On or before December 31, 2026, the department shall submit a report to the Legislature that includes both of the following:

(A) Any further ways to ensure that California maximizes all available federal food assistance during state and federally declared disasters, public health emergencies, or other crises that enable the provision of resources to California households.

(B) Any additional oversight or actions needed to fulfill the objectives of this section and Section 18917.

(2) (A) The requirement for submitting a report imposed under this subdivision is inoperative on January 1, 2030, pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code.

(B) The report to be submitted pursuant to this subdivision shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(d) For purposes of this section, both of the following definitions apply:

(1) “Electrical corporation” has the same meaning as defined in Section 218 of the Public Utilities Code.

(2) “Local publicly owned electric utility” has the same meaning as defined in Section 224.3 of the Public Utilities Code.

SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because a local agency or school district has the authority to levy service charges, fees, or assessments sufficient to pay for the program or level of service mandated by this act or because costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.