



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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LIQUID PROPANE METER TAMPERING

House Bill 4020 (Substitute H-2)
First Analysis (4-1-87)

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MAY 07 1987

Sponsor: Rep. Philip E. Hoffman
Committee: Judiciary

Mich. State Law Library

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Public Act 37 of 1984 strengthened provisions of the penal code designed to combat energy theft. It provided that a person who tampered with a water, steam, electric, or gas meter would be presumed to have done so with intent to avoid payment for those utility services. It also raised from \$50 to \$500 the cutoff between a misdemeanor and a felony in cases of theft of a utility service. The 1984 amendments, as well as prior law, apparently overlooked another type of utility service, that of propane gas. Liquid propane (LP) gas dealers seek inclusion in the anti-theft provisions, saying that they are concerned about the safety hazards created when people attempt to attach their own lines to liquid propane gas tanks.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Michigan Penal Code to include propane gas meters, dealers, and distributors in the prohibitions and penalties for meter tampering and defrauding of utility companies (MCL 750.282).

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The bill has no fiscal implications.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would specifically include propane gas in the utility services covered by the provisions of the penal code that prohibit meter tampering and energy theft. The bill thus would afford propane gas dealers the same protections given other utility services, and would discourage people from attempting dangerous "do-it-yourself" hookups to propane tanks.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan LP Gas Association supports the bill (3-31-87).

H.B. 4020 (4-1-87)