

SFA

BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Fiscal Agency

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House Bill 4020 (as reported without amendment)

Sponsor: Representative Philip E. Hoffman

House Committee: Judiciary

Senate Committee: Judiciary

Date Completed: 5-1-87

RATIONALE

Public Act 37 of 1984 amended provisions of the penal code that are 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. Some people point out that the 1984 amendments, as well as prior law, apparently overlooked another type of utility service, that of propane gas. Saying that they are concerned about the safety hazards created when unauthorized persons attempt to attach their own lines to propane gas tanks, some people propose that propane gas should therefore be included in the anti-tampering provisions of the penal code.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Penal Code to include propane gas meters, dealers, and distributors in the provisions that prohibit against and prescribe penalties for utility meter tampering and the defrauding of utility companies.

MCL 750.282

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

ARGUMENTS**Supporting Argument**

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.

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

H.B. 4020 (5-1-87)