Overview of CSSB 1976

- With the expiration of the System Benefit Fund, the statutory basis of future determination of eligibility and treatment of low-income electric customers is unclear.
  - The System Benefit Fund was created in 1999 as part of the advent of electric competition in Texas. The program included electric bill discount to low-income Texans, customer education programs and other benefits to transition to competition.
  - Under PURA 39.903, low-income customers are identified using information from the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), which is provided to the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC), to create a list of low-income electric customers. That section will expire on August 31, 2017.

- CSSB 1976 will reinstate the ability for the HHSC to coordinate with the PUC to populate a list of customers that meet the eligibility criteria, provided one or more retail electric provider (REP) requests that the list be developed by July 31 of the previous fiscal year.
  - The REP or REPs that voluntarily request the list would agree to reimburse the PUC for the cost of developing the list.

CSSB 1976 will allow REPs to continue to provide benefits to low-income customers

- Without this bill, there will be no fair or consistent method to identify low-income electric customers to whom REPs could offer services that specifically benefit low-income Texans on a competitive basis.

- The bill would simply allow the PUC to continue to coordinate with DHHS to have the same list of customers they had in the past, so REPs can offer services that are tailored to specific customer needs.

- As substituted, CSSB 1976 will have no fiscal impact to the state.