

First Bill To Clear General Assembly Concerns Rising Power Bills

FRANKFORT, KY. — Senate Bill (SB) 172 has passed the Kentucky House of Representatives and now heads to the governor’s desk. The legislation is the first bill to pass both chambers during the 2026 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly.

Carried in the House by Rep. Patrick Flannery, R-Olive Hill, SB 172 addresses sudden spikes in electric bills caused by sharp increases in fuel costs, particularly during extreme weather events.

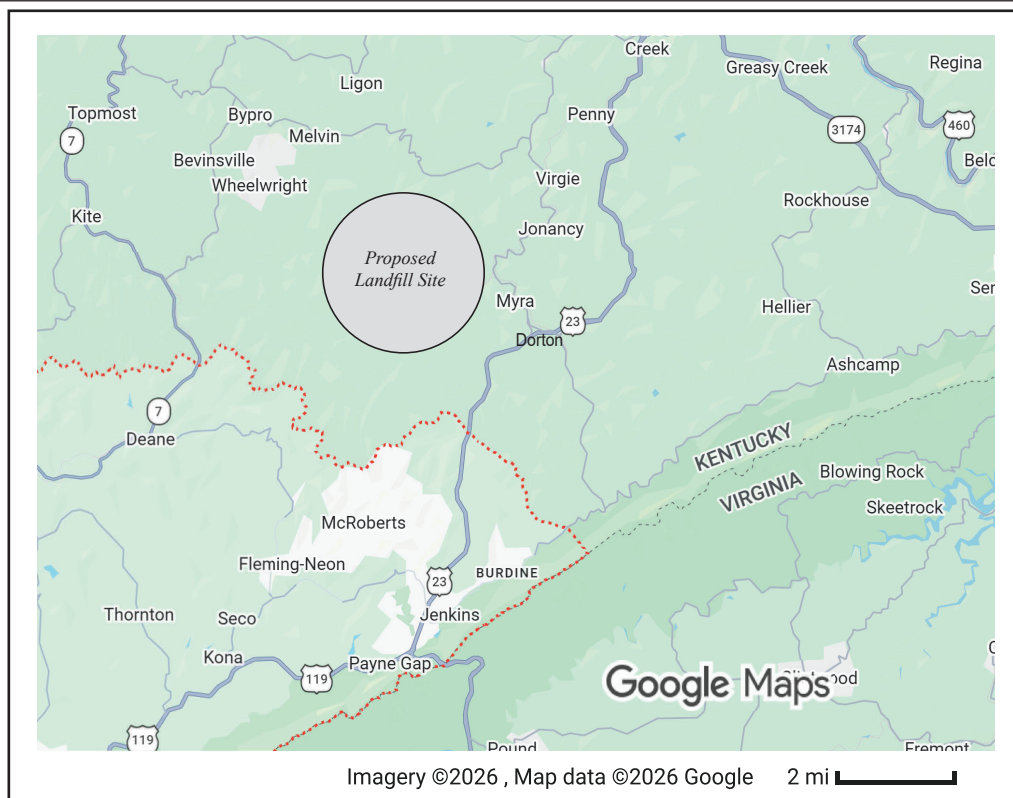
The one-page bill provides the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) with the authority, upon request from a utility provider, to spread fuel cost recovery over several months rather than allowing a large, one-time surcharge to hit consumers all at once.

Under current law, when utilities face higher fuel expenses, often driven by volatility in natural gas markets, those costs are recovered through a fuel adjustment surcharge added to monthly electric bills.

“This is a simple, consumer-friendly bill that gives the Public Service Commission a tool to address the peaks and valleys we’re seeing in fuel adjustment surcharges,” Sen. Phillip Wheeler of Pikeville said. “When someone opens their electric bill and sees a large, unexpected increase, that creates real hardship, especially for families on fixed incomes. This allows those costs to be spread out in a more manageable way.”

Wheeler noted that recent cold weather caused natural gas prices to

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Proposed Pike County Landfill Raises Concerns for Nearby Letcher Communities

A proposal being explored by the Pike County Fiscal Court to establish a new landfill on a former surface mine site is drawing increasing attention from neighboring communities, including parts of Letcher County, where the proposed location would sit within roughly ten miles of the City of Jenkins.

Pike County officials discussed ongoing problems with the county’s existing landfill and long-term solid waste options during a special meeting of the fiscal court on Feb. 16. The discussion stretched for more than 90 minutes and included a PowerPoint presentation from USA Waste Management LLC, a private company that is exploring the possibility of developing a landfill in the Dorton/Myra area.

The meeting drew a crowd of more than 200 people, overflowing the courtroom and hallway. Many in attendance expressed concern over the proposed landfill’s potential environmental and quality-of-life impacts.

Because the gathering was designated as a special meeting, public comment was not permitted under Kentucky’s open meetings law, which allows discussion of non-agenda items so long as no formal action is taken.

Pike County Judge-Executive Ray S. Jones II told attendees that the issue would be placed on the agenda for the court’s March 3 meeting, at which time limited public comment would be allowed. Jones also pushed back against what he described as misinformation circulating on social media.

“You have been given a lot of erroneous information,” Jones told the crowd. “The fiscal court has not voted to let a landfill come in. This only allows a future landfill company to negotiate with the fiscal court.”

Jones explained that the controversy stems from a recently issued Request for Proposals (RFP), which he described as an “exploration” of using a privately operated land-

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