

CS for SB 194

1 THE STATE SENATE
2 Tuesday, February 27, 2001

3 Committee Substitute for
4 Senate Bill No. 194

5 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 194 - By: EASLEY of the
6 Senate and RICE of the House.

7 An Act relating to oil and gas; creating the Helping
8 Oklahomans Pay for Energy (HOPE) Act; providing short title;
9 stating legislative intent; creating HOPE Revolving Fund;
10 stating purpose; providing for noncodification; and
11 declaring an emergency.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

13 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be
14 codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

15 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Helping
16 Oklahomans Pay for Energy (HOPE) Act".

17 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be
18 codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

19 The State of Oklahoma has enjoyed a long partnership with its
20 crude oil and natural gas producers, an industry that has worked
21 diligently through difficult times and good times to provide the
22 energy our state and nation requires. Both the State of Oklahoma
23 and its energy producing partners prosper during times of strong
24 prices for crude oil and natural gas. The year 2000 was one such
25 time, especially the months of November and December when natural
26 gas values more than doubled. This market-driven price increase

1 brought renewed business activity to the natural gas exploration and
2 production business and contributed significant new tax revenues to
3 the state. However, the surge in the price of natural gas, coupled
4 with the unfortunate timing of the most severely cold early-winter
5 in state history, has also caused an immediate hardship for some
6 consumers. Many elderly, indigent and other Oklahomans living on
7 fixed incomes have been faced with significant and unexpected
8 increases in the cost of heating their homes. Now, the State of
9 Oklahoma again calls on its energy partners within the oil and
10 natural gas industry to assist in alleviating this crisis.

11 It is the intent of the Oklahoma Legislature to provide,
12 pursuant to state law, an additional Twelve Million Dollars
13 (\$12,000,000.00) in dedicated funding for the Low-Income Heating and
14 Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) administered by the Department of
15 Human Services. In recognition of our mutual goal of providing
16 needed financial assistance to our state's most vulnerable citizens,
17 the Oklahoma Legislature hereby creates pursuant to the provisions
18 of this act, the Helping Oklahomans Pay for Energy (HOPE) Revolving
19 Fund and encourages everyone, especially those leaders in the oil
20 and gas industry, to make a tax deductible charitable contribution
21 exclusively for LIHEAP assistance.

22 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be
23 codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

1 There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund
2 for the Department of Human Services to be designated the "Help
3 Oklahomans Pay for Energy (HOPE) Revolving Fund". The fund shall be
4 a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall
5 consist of all monies designated for deposit thereto. All monies
6 accruing to the credit of the fund are hereby appropriated and may
7 be budgeted and expended by the Department exclusively for making
8 payments to provide financial assistance to residents of this state
9 qualifying for the Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program
10 (LIHEAP). Expenditures from the fund shall be made upon warrants
11 issued by the State Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by
12 law with the Director of State Finance for approval and payment.

13 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
14 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby
15 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
16 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

17 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES &
18 REGULATORY AFFAIRS, dated 2-22-01 - DO PASS, As Amended and
19 Coauthored.