AN ACT EXEMPTING CERTAIN NATURAL GAS UTILITIES FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF A UNIVERSAL SYSTEM BENEFITS PROGRAM; AMENDING SECTION 69-3-1408, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A RETROACTIVE APPLICABILITY DATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 69-3-1408, MCA, is amended to read:

"69-3-1408. Universal system benefits programs -- establishing nonbypassable rate -- exemption. (1) Except as provided in subsection (4), a natural gas utility shall implement, upon commission approval and subject to ongoing commission oversight and direction, a universal system benefits program.

(2) The commission shall establish a universal system benefits charge that all natural gas transmission services providers or all distribution services providers, or both, in the state of Montana shall charge to all end-use customers, taking into consideration the current level of expenditure by the natural gas utility, cost-effectiveness, and similar costs imposed in other states. The charge may be established and revised through a universal system benefits charge tracking procedure. The method of assessing the charge may not disproportionately burden a large transmission services provider's customers. Within the universal system benefits charge, beginning January 1, 2007, a natural gas utility's minimum annual funding requirement for low-income weatherization and low-income energy bill assistance is established at 0.42% of a natural gas utility's annual revenue for the previous year. A natural gas utility must receive credit for its internal programs or activities that qualify as universal system benefits programs.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (4), a natural gas utility shall file an annual report of its universal system benefits charges, programs, and program funding levels with the commission in a manner prescribed by the commission.

(4) A natural gas utility that serves 200 or fewer customers is exempt from the requirements of subsections (1) through (3)."
Section 2. Saving clause. [This act] does not affect rights and duties that matured, penalties that were incurred, or proceedings that were begun before [the effective date of this act].

Section 3. Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

Section 4. Retroactive applicability. [This act] applies retroactively, within the meaning of 1-2-109, to the compliance year beginning January 1, 2015.

- END -
I hereby certify that the within bill, SB 0010, originated in the Senate.

________________________________________
Secretary of the Senate

________________________________________
President of the Senate

Signed this ____________________________ day
of ____________________________, 2015.

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Speaker of the House

Signed this ____________________________ day
of ____________________________, 2015.
SENATE BILL NO. 10
INTRODUCED BY J. KEANE
BY REQUEST OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

AN ACT EXEMPTING CERTAIN NATURAL GAS UTILITIES FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF A UNIVERSAL SYSTEM BENEFITS PROGRAM; AMENDING SECTION 69-3-1408, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A RETROACTIVE APPLICABILITY DATE.