

Summary of Michigan Bill Draft on
Management of Privately Owned Public Utilities

Privately owned public utilities can raise problems because of their monopolistic position and the essential nature of their services. Michigan Assembly draft No. 2781 would reorganize the management structure of such utilities without changing ownership. Boards of directors would be composed of equal numbers of stock holders, subscribers and employees, the latter two groups directly responsible to their counterparts on 15 member councils. The two councils must consult with the board and ratify its annual plan. Each council appoints a vice president and can initiate recalls of a member of the board. Worker participation committees, organized by plant or production sector, are to advise the workers' council and deal with health, safety, benefits, training, hiring, firing, promotions and the organization of basic work units to set production quotas. A duly elected labor union can assume the responsibilities of the employee group required by the act, if membership in the two groups coincides. Savings generated by employee initiated changes are passed on to workers or customers as incentive for further improvements. These decentralized organizations, it is expected, will themselves operate most efficiently in the public interest without further governmental regulation.

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