PSC asks closed doors

House utilities panel agrees on 6-2 vote

The Michigan Public Service Commission, which sets utility rates, would be exempt from the Open Meetings Act under a bill before the State House of Representatives, The House Public Utilities Commission of the Commission of the Meetings and the Meeting of the Meeting and the Meeting of the

vote.
"I view the PSC as a policy-mak-

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p.m. in A Building on the campus at 2900 Featherstone west of Opdyke in

There will also be welding demon-strations, alternate energy, heating and cooling, and machine shop semi-

Auburn Hills.

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THE THREE-MEMBER PSC said it circulates memos through a courier in order to share views because, if two members met face-to-face, they would constitute a quorrian and have to meet in a formal, open service.

session.

Kevin Wilson, who is on Stallworth's staff, said the bill was prompted by the consolidating of several co-generation electric rate cases. The effect of consolidation was to put all cases back at the tarting point.

The PSC said that an exemption

from open meetings would speed up communications and work with the staff.

Dorothy Wideman, the PSC's director of regulatory affairs, added, "If it's an open meeting, you're subject to comments from the public, which is very time consuming."
PSC also said confidential bustness information is involved.

BUT GUBOW objected that the

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PSC had never demonstrated that meeting in the open would be a hin-

risc that never demonstrated that a three demonstrates that the per would be a hin-mence.

"They don't really follow the Open Meetings Act now," he sald, referring to the note-passing process.
Joseph Tuchinsky, spokesman for the Michigan Citizens Lobby, which requently fights utility rate increases, sald, "The PSC has evaded the Open Meetings Act for 11 years. It has held open meetings only for the formality of voting."

MCL proposed that instead of exempling the PSC, the public agency try deliberating in public for one year.

"We propose a year's test of whether there's any harm to holding public meetings. If that is embar-rassing to a poorly informed legisla-tor, the public should know that," Tuchinsky said.

He said Stallworth's bill, as writ-ten, allows PSC to close down every-meeting. If open meetings are prov-en not to be feasible, he said, then PSC should be given tightly crafted limits on closed-door sessions.

Too late — panel voted

Joseph Tuchinsky says a legislative committee may have violated the Open Meetings Act when it reported out a bill to allow closed sessions by the state Public Service Commission. Tuchinsky, of the Michigan Citizens Lobby, received a notice that House Public Utilities Committee the House Public Visities Committee would meet "after session" to

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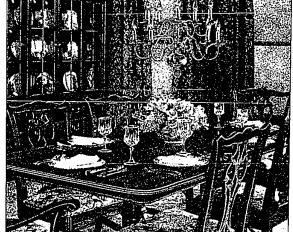
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