

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 107
Economic Matters

(Delegate Morhaim, *et al.*)

Telephone Companies - Billing for Unaffiliated Entity

This bill prohibits a telephone company from including a charge on behalf of an unaffiliated entity on a customer's bill for service rendered to a customer without that customer's prior authorization.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill will not materially affect State government operations.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Section 20.45.04.01 of the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) states that a customer's bill from a telephone company shall be rendered at least monthly and shall contain a clear listing of all charges and credits. The regulation further requires that for the purposes of clarity the customer's bill must include the total amount due with detail concerning the charges, including applicable federal and local taxes for: (1) local monthly services from the current to the next bill date; (2) additional message units, if appropriate, for the month before the billing date; (3) toll calls and telegrams, if appropriate, placed before the billing date; (4) other charges and credits with appropriate explanation.

Background: The Office of People's Counsel indicates that an unaffiliated entity could include a wireless telephone service provider, a pager service provider, or any other entity and may not necessarily even be related to the provision of communications. The prohibited charge need not arise at the customer's telephone service address, or be related in any way to telephone service.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 126 (Senator Hollinger) – Finance.

Information Source(s): Public Service Commission, Office of People's Counsel, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 2, 2004
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