

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 446 (Delegate Stein, *et al.*)
Economic Matters

Telephone Companies - Distribution of Telephone Directories - Customer Opt Out

This bill requires telephone companies to provide each customer an opportunity to opt out of receiving telephone directories distributed by, or on behalf of, the telephone company. The Public Service Commission (PSC) must adopt regulations implementing the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. PSC can adopt the required regulations with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 20.45.04.11) requires telephone companies to publish an alphabetical directory once a year. The directory must include each customer, except public telephones and numbers unlisted at the customer's request. The telephone company must provide each customer with a copy of the directory or directories covering his or her area. Additional copies must be made available upon request and a copy must be filed with PSC. Telephone companies are not required to allow a customer to opt out of receiving a directory.

A "telephone company" means a public service company that owns telephone lines to receive, transmit, or communicate telephone or teletype communications; or leases,

licenses, or sells telephone or teletype communications. A telephone company does not include a cellular service provider.

Background: PSC regulates gas, electric, telephone, water, sewage disposal, and certain passenger transportation companies doing business in Maryland. PSC is authorized to hear and decide matters relating to (1) rate adjustments; (2) applications to exercise or abandon franchises; (3) approval of issuance of securities; (4) promulgation of new rules and regulations; and (5) quality of utility and common carrier service. PSC sets utility rates, collects and maintains records and reports of public service companies, reviews plans for service, inspects equipment, audits financial records, handles consumer complaints, promulgates and enforces rules and regulations, defends its decisions on appeal to State courts, and intervenes in relevant cases before federal regulatory commissions and federal courts.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Public Service Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 4, 2010
mam/lgc

Analysis by: Erik P. Timme

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510