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**By: Delegate Owings**

Introduced and read first time: February 1, 1996

Assigned to: Environmental Matters

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Utility Regulation - Telephone Companies - Measured Service**

3 FOR the purpose of enabling the Public Service Commission to authorize mandatory  
4 telephone company charges for certain measured services to certain customers  
5 under certain circumstances.

6 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
7 Article 78 - Public Service Commission Law  
8 Section 68(a)  
9 Annotated Code of Maryland  
10 (1995 Replacement Volume)

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
12 Article 78 - Public Service Commission Law  
13 Section 68(c)  
14 Annotated Code of Maryland  
15 (1995 Replacement Volume)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
17 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article 78 - Public Service Commission Law**

19 68.

20 (a) The Commission shall have the power to determine just and reasonable rates  
21 of public service companies, whether as maximum, minimum or maximum and minimum,  
22 respectively. The rates so determined shall be fixed by order to be served upon each  
23 public service company affected thereby. This subsection does not apply to small rural  
24 electric cooperatives.

25 (c) (1) [The] SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE  
26 Commission may not authorize any mandatory telephone company charges based on a  
27 measured time period unit rate for local messages.

28 (2) Paragraph (1) of this subsection does not preclude the Commission from  
29 any study or evaluation of mandatory telephone company charges. IF, AFTER  
30 EVALUATING MANDATORY TELEPHONE COMPANY CHARGES BASED ON A

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1 MEASURED TIME PERIOD UNIT RATE FOR LOCAL MESSAGES FOR NONRESIDENTIAL  
2 CUSTOMERS, THE COMMISSION DETERMINES THAT MANDATORY CHARGES BASED  
3 ON A MEASURED TIME PERIOD UNIT RATE ARE APPROPRIATE AND NECESSARY TO  
4 ENSURE JUST AND REASONABLE RATES FOR NONRESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS, THE  
5 COMMISSION MAY AUTHORIZE MANDATORY MEASURED TIME PERIOD UNIT RATES  
6 FOR NONRESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS.

7 (3) If the Commission authorizes any telephone company to offer to  
8 residential customers the option of telephone charges based on a measured time period  
9 unit rate for local messages, the Commission shall also require the telephone company to  
10 offer to residential customers:

11 (i) The option of an unlimited number and duration of local calls; and

12 (ii) The option of a specific charge per local call, regardless of the  
13 duration of the local call.

14 (4) Until December 1, 1985 a telephone company may not require the  
15 payment of an order processing charge or line change charge for a residential customer's  
16 first change to any type of local telephone service based on charges per call or measured  
17 time period unit rates.

18 (5) A telephone company may not require the payment of an order  
19 processing charge or line change charge for a residential customer's first change from  
20 local telephone service based on charges for measured time period unit rates, if the  
21 change occurs within 18 months of the date that the consumer elects this telephone  
22 service.

23 (6) The Public Service Commission may not authorize any telephone  
24 company to charge for the distance of a call within any local calling area.

25 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
26 October 1, 1996.