

HOUSE BILL 137

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2001 Regular Session
11r0624
CF 11r1414

By: **Delegates Stern, Hurson, Owings, Barve, Elliott, W. Baker, Barkley,
Bozman, Boutin, Cadden, Carlson, Hecht, James, Mandel, Marriott,
Pitkin, Rosso, Rudolph, Stull, Cryor, Conroy, and Klima**

Introduced and read first time: January 17, 2001

Assigned to: Environmental Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Telecommunications - Competition - Task Force**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force to encourage and monitor competition
4 among providers of telecommunications services in the State; requiring the Task
5 Force to meet a minimum number of times annually; requiring the Task Force to
6 submit an annual report of its findings to the General Assembly; providing for
7 the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the establishment of a Task
8 Force to encourage and monitor competition among telecommunications service
9 providers.

10 BY adding to

11 Article - Public Utility Companies
12 Section 8-304
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (1998 Volume and 2000 Supplement)

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

17 **Article - Public Utility Companies**

18 8-304.

19 (A) THERE IS A TASK FORCE ON COMPETITION AMONG
20 TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDERS.

21 (B) THE PURPOSE OF THE TASK FORCE IS TO ENCOURAGE AND MONITOR
22 COMPETITION AMONG PROVIDERS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN THE
23 STATE.

24 (C) THE TASK FORCE CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING 17 MEMBERS:

25 (1) TWO DELEGATES, APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
26 DELEGATES;

1 (2) TWO SENATORS FROM THE MARYLAND SENATE, APPOINTED BY THE
2 PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;

3 (3) ONE MEMBER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL,
4 APPOINTED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL;

5 (4) THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL, OR THE PEOPLE'S COUNSEL'S DESIGNEE;

6 (5) THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND
7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE; AND

8 (6) THE FOLLOWING 10 MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:

9 (I) ONE MEMBER FROM THE COMMISSION;

10 (II) FOUR MEMBERS FROM AMONG THE COMPETITIVE LOCAL
11 EXCHANGE CARRIERS OF THE STATE, WITH NO MORE THAN ONE REPRESENTATIVE
12 FROM THE SAME COMPANY;

13 (III) ONE MEMBER REPRESENTING A CONSUMER ADVOCACY
14 GROUP; AND

15 (IV) ONE MEMBER FROM EACH OF THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES:

16 1. AT&T;

17 2. VERIZON;

18 3. MCI; AND

19 4. SPRINT.

20 (D) THE GOVERNOR SHALL APPOINT A CHAIRPERSON OF THE TASK FORCE
21 FROM AMONG THE TASK FORCE MEMBERS.

22 (E) A MEMBER WHO LEAVES THE TASK FORCE SHALL BE REPLACED BY A
23 SUCCESSOR CHOSEN BY THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY WITH AUTHORITY OVER THAT
24 MEMBER'S POSITION.

25 (F) THE COMMISSION SHALL PROVIDE STAFF SUPPORT FOR THE TASK FORCE
26 TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETING RESOURCES.

27 (G) THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TASK FORCE ARE TO:

28 (1) STUDY AND PROMOTE COMPETITION AMONG PROVIDERS OF
29 TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN THE STATE;

30 (2) MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMOVING BARRIERS TO
31 INCREASED COMPETITION AMONG PROVIDERS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS
32 SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF THE STATE;

1 (3) MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMOVING BARRIERS TO
2 INCREASED COMPETITION AMONG PROVIDERS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS
3 SERVICES TO SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE STATE;

4 (4) ENSURE THAT CONSUMERS, PARTICULARLY CONSUMERS WITH
5 LIMITED INCOMES, WILL BE PROTECTED DURING A TRANSITION PERIOD TO
6 INCREASED COMPETITION AMONG PROVIDERS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS
7 SERVICES IN THE STATE;

8 (5) ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH SPEED BROAD BAND
9 OFFERINGS THROUGHOUT THE STATE;

10 (6) CLOSELY MONITOR THE EFFORTS OF THE COMMISSION IN
11 ENCOURAGING COMPETITION AMONG PROVIDERS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS
12 SERVICES; AND

13 (7) GENERALLY ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT AND
14 IMPLEMENTATION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY.

15 (H) EACH MEMBER OF THE TASK FORCE SHALL SERVE WITHOUT
16 COMPENSATION BUT SHALL BE ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES
17 UNDER THE STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS.

18 (I) THE TASK FORCE SHALL MEET AT LEAST FOUR TIMES A YEAR FOR A
19 PERIOD OF 2 YEARS, AT THE TIMES AND PLACES THAT ITS CHAIRPERSON
20 DETERMINES.

21 (J) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31 OF EACH YEAR, THE TASK FORCE SHALL,
22 SUBJECT TO § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, SUBMIT AN ANNUAL
23 REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS, INCLUDING ANY PROPOSED LEGISLATION, TO THE
24 GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

25 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
26 October 1, 2001. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and 3 months and, at
27 the end of December 31, 2003, with no further action required by the General
28 Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.