

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Revised

House Bill 1164

(Delegates Stern and D. Davis)

Environmental Matters

Finance

Public Service Commission - Standards and Procedures

This bill requires the Public Service Commission (PSC) to issue a decision and order within 180 days of the close of the record in a complaint proceeding between two public service companies. The timeframe within which a proposed order of a PSC commissioner or hearing examiner must be appealed before becoming final, is 30 days, unless the order specifies a shorter period of at least 7 days. PSC may adopt regulations and policies -- consistent with federal law, policies, and regulations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as well as with applicable State law -- to govern the development of competition in the telecommunications (telecom) service market.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's changes could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: In a contested proceeding between two public service companies, there is no statutory timeframe after the close of the record within which PSC must issue a decision and order.

Generally, a proposed order of a PSC commissioner or hearing examiner becomes final unless a party to the proceeding notes an appeal with PSC within 30 days.

In addition to other remedies, PSC may assess a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 against any person for a violation of public utility law, or an effective and outstanding direction, ruling, order, rule, or regulation of PSC. Each violation is a separate offense and each day is a separate violation.

Background: The federal Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996 was the first major overhaul of telecom law in 62 years. The intent of the Act is “to provide for a pro-competitive, de-regulatory national policy framework designed to accelerate rapidly private sector deployment of advanced telecommunications and information technologies and services to all Americans by opening all telecommunications markets to competition.” As the telecom industry continues in a transition from regulated monopoly to competitive marketplace, state and federal laws and regulations continue to shape that transition in an effort to achieve the intent of the Act.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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