

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1062  
Economic Matters

(Delegate Kelly)

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**Public Utilities - Voice over Internet Protocol Service - Customer Address  
Information**

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This bill requires a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service provider to notify customers at activation of VoIP's limitations with respect to the 9-1-1 system. The VoIP service must require customers billed or located in the State to provide monthly updates regarding the physical location at which the VoIP service will be used by the customers. This applies to each VoIP service doing business in the State that provides the registered physical location and callback number of a caller to at 9-1-1 system.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. State operations or finances are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Chapter 581 of 2007 defined "Voice over Internet Protocol service," ("VoIP"), and provided that the Public Service Commission does not have jurisdiction over VoIP, including the imposition of regulatory fees, certification requirements, and the filing or approval of tariffs.

The Voice over Internet Protocol Service Act further provides that it does not either require or prohibit the assessment of 9-1-1 fees in accordance with the Public Safety

Article, require or prohibit the assessment of fees for telecommunications relay service under the State Finance and Procurement Article, require or prohibit the payment of any switched network access rates or other intercarrier compensation rates that may be determined to apply, relieve a company of an otherwise existing obligation to provide telephone lifeline service, or exempt VoIP from generally applicable State and federal laws relating to public safety, or unfair and deceptive trade practices, or exempt VoIP service from the authority of the Division of Consumer Protection in the Office of the Attorney General.

**Background:** VoIP converts the voice signal from a telephone into a digital signal that travels over the Internet. If a call is placed to a regular telephone number, the signal is then converted back at the other end. A VoIP call can be placed from a computer, a special VoIP phone, or a traditional phone using an adapter. In addition, new wireless “hot spots” in public locations such as airports, parks, and cafes allow a user to connect to the Internet, and may enable a person to use VoIP service wirelessly.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

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mcp/hlb

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