

# SENATE BILL 605

C5, S1

6lr2445  
CF 6lr1904

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By: Senator M. Washington

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2026

Assigned to: Finance

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Service Commission – Broadband and Voice Over Internet Protocol**  
3 **Service – Oversight**  
4 **(Broadband Accountability and Affordability Act)**

5 FOR the purpose of authorizing the Public Service Commission to exercise certain oversight  
6 of broadband service and voice over Internet protocol service; requiring the  
7 Commission to assess the adequacy of certain plans for each Internet service  
8 provider; authorizing the Commission to conduct certain evaluations or audits and  
9 require certain remedial action under certain circumstances; and generally relating  
10 to broadband service and voice over Internet protocol service.

11 BY adding to  
12 Article – Public Utilities  
13 Section 5–107  
14 Annotated Code of Maryland  
15 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
17 Article – Public Utilities  
18 Section 8–601  
19 Annotated Code of Maryland  
20 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

21 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
22 Article – Public Utilities  
23 Section 8–602  
24 Annotated Code of Maryland  
25 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



## 1 Article – Public Utilities

2 5-107.

3 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
4 INDICATED.5 (2) (I) “BROADBAND SERVICE” MEANS A MASS-MARKET RETAIL  
6 SERVICE THAT PROVIDES THE CAPABILITY TO TRANSMIT DATA TO AND RECEIVE  
7 DATA FROM ALL OR SUBSTANTIALLY ALL INTERNET ENDPOINTS, INCLUDING ANY  
8 CAPABILITIES THAT ARE INCIDENTAL TO AND ENABLE THE OPERATION OF  
9 COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES PROVIDED BY A WIRELINE, FIXED WIRELESS, MOBILE  
10 WIRELESS BROADBAND, OR SATELLITE SERVICE PROVIDER.11 (II) “BROADBAND SERVICE” DOES NOT INCLUDE DIAL-UP  
12 INTERNET SERVICE.13 (3) “INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER” MEANS AN ENTITY THAT  
14 PROVIDES BROADBAND SERVICE TO A CUSTOMER IN THE STATE.15 (4) “VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL SERVICE” OR “VoIP  
16 SERVICE” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 8-601 OF THIS ARTICLE.17 (B) THE COMMISSION MAY EXERCISE OVERSIGHT OF BROADBAND SERVICE  
18 AND VoIP SERVICE.19 (C) THE COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT  
20 EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT OF THE QUALITY, RELIABILITY, AND RESILIENCE OF  
21 BROADBAND SERVICE AND VoIP SERVICE, INCLUDING:22 (1) ESTABLISHING STANDARDS TO ENSURE THE RESILIENCE AND  
23 RELIABILITY OF BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE;

24 (2) REQUIRING EACH INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER TO:

25 (I) SUBMIT INFORMATION RELATING TO NETWORK  
26 RELIABILITY, INCLUDING REPORTING OUTAGES;27 (II) MAINTAIN NETWORKS SUFFICIENTLY IN ORDER TO ENSURE  
28 RELIABLE, SAFE, AND ADEQUATE SERVICES;29 (III) REPORT DATA ON THE AVAILABILITY, DEPLOYMENT,  
30 PRICING, AND ADOPTION OF BROADBAND SERVICES AND VoIP SERVICES; AND

1 (IV) SUBMIT TO THE COMMISSION THE PROVIDER'S PLANS FOR  
2 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND POSTEMERGENCY NETWORK RESTORATION;

6 (4) ESTABLISHING MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR BACKUP POWER  
7 GENERATION.

8                   (D) THE COMMISSION SHALL ASSESS THE ADEQUACY OF EACH INTERNET  
9 SERVICE PROVIDER'S PLAN FOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND  
10 POSTEMERGENCY NETWORK RESTORATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS  
11 ADOPTED UNDER THIS SECTION.

12 (E) (1) ON RECEIPT OF A COMPLAINT FROM A CUSTOMER OR BASED ON  
13 DATA COLLECTED FROM PROVIDERS, THE COMMISSION MAY CONDUCT AN  
14 EVALUATION OR AUDIT OF AN INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER'S FACILITIES AND  
15 INFRASTRUCTURE TO ASSESS SERVICE QUALITY, PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS, OR  
16 NETWORK RESILIENCE.

25 (F) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2028, AND EACH JANUARY 1 THEREAFTER,  
26 THE COMMISSION SHALL REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN ACCORDANCE  
27 WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON PROGRESS MADE  
28 TOWARD IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND NETWORK  
29 RESILIENCE.

30 (G) (1) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION MAY BE CONSTRUED TO LIMIT ANY  
31 RIGHT OR AUTHORITY GRANTED TO THE OFFICE OF STATEWIDE BROADBAND  
32 UNDER TITLE 6.5 OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ARTICLE.

4 8-601.

5 In this subtitle:

6 (1) "voice over Internet protocol service" or "VoIP service" means any  
7 service that:

11 (ii) requires a broadband connection from the user's location; and

16 8-602.

17       (a) [The] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN § 5-107 OF THIS ARTICLE, THE  
18 Commission does not have jurisdiction over the regulation of VoIP service, including the  
19 imposition of regulatory fees, certification requirements, and the filing or approval of  
20 tariffs.

21 (b) Nothing in this subtitle may be construed to:

(1) require or prohibit the assessment of 9–1–1 fees in accordance with § 1–310 of the Public Safety Article on VoIP;

24 (2) require or prohibit the assessment of fees for telecommunications relay  
25 service under Title 3, Subtitle 8 of the State Finance and Procurement Article:

26 (3) require or prohibit the payment of any switched network access rates  
27 or other intercarrier compensation rates that may be determined to apply:

28 (4) relieve a company that is otherwise subject to § 8–201 of this title of its  
29 obligation to provide telephone lifeline service over local exchange access lines that are  
30 subject to the Commission's jurisdiction;

1 to exempt VoIP service from the authority of the Division of Consumer Protection in the  
2 Office of the Attorney General; or

3 (6) remove the Commission's jurisdiction over circuit switched local  
4 exchange access service.

5 (c) A company that moves a customer from a Commission-approved tariff service  
6 to VoIP service shall notify the customer that the Commission does not have jurisdiction  
7 over the regulation of VoIP service and that complaints about VoIP service may be filed  
8 with the Division of Consumer Protection in the Office of the Attorney General.

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
10 October 1, 2026.