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March 10, 2026

To: The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Karen S. Straughn
Consumer Protection Division.

Re: House Bill 1562 – Consumer Protection – Telecommunications Service Outage –
Automatic Credit (Telecommunications Service Outage Automatic Credit Act)
(SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General submits the following written testimony to support House Bill 1562 submitted by Delegate Chao Wu. This bill requires a telecommunications service provider to provide an automatic credit to a consumer's account any time there is an outage of at least 3 hours and requires reasonable notice to consumers of the outage, any estimates on the duration of the outage and that an automatic credit will be applied. It further makes a violation of this statute a violation of the Consumer Protection Act.

A telecommunications service outage can create wide-ranging technical and social difficulties. These impacts vary by scale and duration but commonly include communication disruptions, security risks, emergencies and public safety risks. It can also result in isolation for vulnerable populations, disruption of online education or remote work access, interruptions in telehealth services and failures by smart home devices. Because these systems are interdependent, a telecom outage often creates ripple effects beyond just “no internet.”

Automatically crediting customers for telecommunications service outages is important to ensure that consumers receive what they paid for. In addition, automatic credits ensure accountability and can reduce operating costs for the telecommunications provider, who would no longer have

to handle individual disputes concerning the outages. Overall, automatic credits protect consumers, incentivize reliability, reduce individual disputes, promote fairness and strengthen public trust.

For the reasons set forth, the Consumer Protection Division requests that the Environment and Transportation Committee issue a favorable report on this bill.

cc: The Honorable Chao Wu
Members, Environment and Transportation Committee