

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1611

As Passed House

March 6, 1997

Title: An act relating to reducing the time required for public notice of telecommunications rate reductions.

Brief Description: Allowing a telecommunications company to reduce a rate or charge in a more streamlined manner.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Energy & Utilities (originally sponsored by Representatives DeBolt, Poulsen, Mastin, Hankins and Kessler; by request of Utilities & Transportation Commission).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Energy & Utilities: 2/18/97, 2/25/97 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/6/97, 94-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Crouse, Chairman; DeBolt, Vice Chairman; Mastin, Vice Chairman; Poulsen, Ranking Minority Member; Morris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bush; Cooper; Honeyford; Kessler; Mielke; Mulliken and B. Thomas.

Staff: Margaret Allen (786-7110).

Background: Every telecommunications company providing service in Washington must file a schedule of rates and charges with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC). A telecommunications company proposing to change a rate or charge must file the proposed change with the WUTC and comply with a 30-day notice requirement. The WUTC may approve or suspend the proposed change.

Upon a showing of good cause, the WUTC may allow changes without requiring the 30-day notice, by issuing an order specifying the change to be made, when the change will take effect, and the manner in which the change is to be filed and published.

Summary of Bill: A telecommunications company may file a tariff that decreases a rate or charge, with 10 days' notice and without receiving a special order from the WUTC, if the filing does not contain an offsetting increase to another rate or charge, and the company agrees not to file, for a period of one year, for an increase to any rate or charge to recover the revenue deficit that results from the decrease.

Technical corrections are made to an existing statute.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill is a good step in reducing administrative burdens on small telecommunications companies. Allowing rate decreases with 10 days' notice is in the public interest.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Teresa Osinski, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission; and Ray Shindler, Washington Independent Telephone Association.