

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2553

Title: An act relating to mandatory measured telecommunications service.

Brief Description: Extending the prohibition on filing for a tariff on mandatory measured telecommunications service.

Sponsors: Representatives Crouse, Morris, DeBolt, Kessler, Cooper, Benson, Mielke, Dunshee, Hankins, Delvin, Zellinsky, Constantine, Kastama and O'Brien.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Meeting Date: January 20, 1998

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Margaret Allen (786-7110)

Background: Most telephone customers in Washington pay a flat monthly rate for local telephone service. Many of the local exchange companies offer their customers the option of paying for local calls on a per call basis. This practice is commonly known as local measured service. Under this option, the telephone customer pays a lower monthly rate and then pays for the calls actually made, based on the time of day, length of call, and in some cases, the distance of the call.

Telecommunications service providers file tariffs, or in some cases price lists, with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC). In 1984, the Legislature temporarily prohibited the WUTC from approving telecommunications tariffs that include mandatory local measured service. The prohibition does not explicitly apply to price lists. The prohibition also does not apply to mobile services, pay telephone services, or to any other service that has traditionally been offered on a measured basis.

The prohibition has been extended a few times, most recently in 1993, and is currently set to expire June 1, 1998.

Summary of Bill: The prohibition is extended for three years until June 1, 2001, and is explicitly made applicable to filings of price lists.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: None requested.

Effective Date: June 1, 1998