

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5846

As of February 19, 2001

Title: An act relating to prohibiting charges for long-distance telecommunications services after the local exchange telecommunications service has been canceled.

Brief Description: Prohibiting long-distance charges after the local phone number has been canceled.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, T. Sheldon and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Economic Development & Telecommunications: 2/20/01.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Staff: Andrea McNamara (786-7483)

Background: When telephone customers subscribe to a long-distance carrier that is different than the company providing their local telephone service, the opportunity exists for customer confusion when the local number is cancelled or transferred. Many customers expect that their long-distance service will be cancelled or transferred automatically when they change their local telephone number.

Complaints have been raised about long-distance companies continuing to bill customers minimum monthly fees for service related to a particular telephone number after the local telephone number was cancelled or transferred to a new telephone number.

Summary of Bill: Telecommunications companies are prohibited from charging fees for long-distance service related to a local telephone number after the customer has cancelled service for that number. Cancellation of the local telephone number is a complete defense to payment of any subsequent charges or fees for long-distance service.

Local exchange telecommunications companies must notify customers when local service is cancelled or transferred that the customer is responsible for notifying the customer's long-distance carrier of the cancellation or transfer. Local exchange companies may notify long-distance carriers.

Nothing in the bill prohibits a long-distance company from charging a reasonable fee to cancel or transfer long-distance service to a new telephone number.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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