
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that competition in the
2 telecommunications market is robust. Consumers have many
3 choices when deciding how to communicate: traditional land-line
4 telephony, voice over internet protocol, and wireless phone
5 service.

6 The legislature further finds that advances in voice over
7 internet protocol and wireless phone services make these
8 technologies viable substitutes for traditional land line
9 telephony. These services currently provide 9-1-1 capability,
10 number portability, reliable service, and extensive network
11 coverage. Even though some federal and state regulators feel
12 that these new technologies, especially wireless phone service,
13 can never replace the traditional land line phone for casual and
14 emergency communication needs, many consumers do not share this
15 view. According to the Federal Communications Commission, the
16 number of switched access lines of Hawaii's incumbent local
17 exchange carrier decreased from 735,459 in 2001 to only 541,030
18 in 2007. The number of wireless subscribers in Hawaii, however,



1 increased from 595,721 to 1,096,181 over the same period. While
2 some consumers subscribing to wireless phone service maintain
3 their land line or wired phone service, other consumers are
4 subscribing to wireless service as a true alternative and thus
5 are disconnecting their land line service. Hawaii is not unique
6 in this respect: the telecommunications market trend is similar
7 across the United States.

8 The legislature further finds that competitive local
9 exchange carriers, currently enjoying a non-competitive switched
10 access market, should adapt to the changing telecommunications
11 market. When the Telecommunications Act of 1996 opened up
12 competition in the telecommunications market, it forced
13 incumbent local exchange carriers to wholesale their services to
14 competitive local exchange carriers so that they (the
15 competitive local exchange carriers) in turn, could re-sell
16 these services to consumers. The Act was designed to open up
17 competition by allowing other carriers into the market, in hopes
18 that these other carriers would eventually develop their own
19 networks. After twelve years of competition, competitive local
20 exchange carriers are still heavily reliant upon the incumbent
21 local exchange carriers for wholesale services. This regulatory
22 scheme has impeded growth of the incumbent carriers, as



1 competition from other telecommunications and information
2 services have eroded market share and revenue. Thus, highly
3 regulated switched access services will continue to saddle
4 incumbent local exchange carriers from competing with other
5 services, while competitive local exchange carriers continue to
6 rely on the re-sale of the incumbent's network services.

7 The legislature further finds that competition in Hawaii's
8 telecommunications market is not a level playing field; the
9 incumbent local exchange carrier is highly regulated, while
10 other telecommunications service providers do not share the same
11 level of regulation. Although the incumbent local exchange
12 carrier continues to maintain the majority of lines, this
13 dominance of market share does not take into account the
14 meteoric rise of wireless subscribers and voice over internet
15 protocol service. To determine competition in a modern
16 telecommunications market, all types of services need to be
17 evaluated for their effects in the marketplace. It will also
18 force competitive local exchange carriers to adapt their
19 strategies in a competitive environment.

20 The purpose of this Act is to require the public utilities
21 commission to:



- 1 (1) Classify the State's local exchange intrastate
- 2 services as fully competitive with respect to certain
- 3 classifications of services; and
- 4 (2) Require telecommunications carriers to file their
- 5 rates, fares, charges, and bundled service offerings
- 6 for information purposes only.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 269, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
8 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
9 and to read as follows:

10 **"§269- Local exchange intrastate services; fully**
11 **competitive.** (a) After July 1, 2009, the public utilities
12 commission shall treat the State's local exchange intrastate
13 services, under the commission's classification of services
14 relating to costs, rates, and pricing, as fully competitive and
15 apply all commission rules in accordance with that designation.
16 In addition, a telecommunications carrier shall not be required
17 to obtain approval or provide any cost support or other
18 information to establish or otherwise modify in any manner its
19 rates, fares, and charges, or to bundle any service offerings
20 into a single or combined price package. All rates, fares,
21 charges, and bundled service offerings shall be filed with the
22 public utilities commission for information purposes only.



1 (b) This section shall apply to retail rates charged for
2 service to end-user consumers only and shall not apply to
3 wholesale rates charged for services provided by a
4 telecommunications carrier to another telecommunications
5 provider, a wireless communications provider, a voice over
6 internet protocol communications provider, or other similar
7 communications provider.

8 (c) Nothing herein shall modify any requirements of a
9 telecommunications carrier to provide lifeline telephone
10 service, comply with carrier of last resort obligations, or
11 comply with applicable service quality standards."

12 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

13 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



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Report Title:

Public Utilities; Switched Access Telephone Service; Competition

Description:

Requires the Public Utilities Commission to classify the State's local exchange intrastate services as fully competitive. (SB603 HD1)

SB603 HD1 HMS 2009-3190

