

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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UTILITIES AND ENERGY

Reported by: Senator Carey

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**STATE OF MAINE
SENATE
118TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT " A " to S.P. 243, L.D. 812, Bill, "An Act to Require the Public Utilities Commission to Align Telecommunications Carrier Access Rates with Costs to Foster Economic Development and Competition throughout the State"

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and before the summary and inserting in its place the following:

'Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §7101-B is enacted to read:

§7101-B. Access rates

1. Definitions. As used in this section, the term "intrastate access rates" means rates that a telecommunications service provider pays for access to a local exchange carrier's facilities and services in order to provide intrastate interexchange service.

2. Access rates. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission by May 30, 1999 shall establish and every 2 years reestablish intrastate access rates that are less than or equal to interstate access rates established by the Federal Communications Commission.

3. Consumer rates. If the commission finds that effective competition in the intrastate interexchange market does not exist, the commission shall require all persons providing intrastate interexchange service to reduce their intrastate long-distance rates to reflect net reductions in intrastate access rates ordered by the commission pursuant to subsection 2.

2 **Sec. 2. Report.** By January 1, 1998, the Public Utilities
3 Commission shall submit to the Joint Standing Committee on
4 Utilities and Energy a report detailing its plan and schedule for
5 aligning intrastate access rates with interstate access rates
6 pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section
7 7101-B. The report must also include:

8 1. A discussion of progress made in aligning intrastate
9 access rates with interstate access rates;

10 2. Issues raised by this alignment and how these issues
11 will be addressed; and

12 3. Whether adjustments in other rates may be made in
13 consequence of this alignment and why those adjustments should be
14 made.

15 The report may be included in the commission's annual report
16 submitted pursuant to Title 35-A, section 120, as long as the
17 report is submitted by January 1, 1998.

18 **Sec. 3. Authority to report legislation.** The Joint Standing
19 Committee on Utilities and Energy may report out legislation on
20 intrastate access rates to the Second Regular Session of the
21 118th Legislature.'

22 Further amend the bill by inserting at the end before the
23 summary the following:

32 **FISCAL NOTE**

33 The Public Utilities Commission will incur some minor
34 additional costs to develop certain intrastate access rates and
35 to submit a required report to the Legislature. These costs can
36 be absorbed within the commission's existing budgeted resources.'

38 **SUMMARY**

39 This amendment replaces the bill. This amendment:

40 1. Requires the Public Utilities Commission, by May 30,
41 1999, to set intrastate access rates at or below interstate
42 access rates;

43 2. Requires the commission to order interexchange providers
44 to lower intrastate toll rates to reflect net reductions in
45 intrastate access rates if the commission finds that effective
46 competition does not exist in the intrastate long-distance market;

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2 3. Requires the commission, by January 1, 1998, to issue a
report on access rates to the Joint Standing Committee on
4 Utilities and Energy; and

6 4. Authorizes the Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and
Energy to report out legislation on intrastate access rates to
8 the Second Regular Session of the 118th Legislature.