

§7101. Telecommunications policy

1. Universal service. The Legislature declares and finds that the 50-year effort to bring affordable, universally available telephone service to the public has served the State well; universal telephone service has contributed to the State's economic, social and political integration and development; the public benefits from universal telephone service because each telephone subscriber receives a more valuable service when virtually anyone else in the State can be called; and a significant rate increase may threaten universal service by forcing some Maine people to discontinue their telephone service. It is the policy of the State that telephone service must continue to be universally available, especially to the poor, at affordable rates.

[PL 1993, c. 410, Pt. OOO, §1 (NEW).]

2. Economic development. The Legislature further declares and finds that a modern state-of-the-art telecommunications network is essential for the economic health and vitality of the State and for improvement in the quality of life for all Maine citizens. Therefore, it is the goal of the State that all Maine's businesses and citizens should have affordable access to an integrated telecommunication infrastructure capable of providing voice, data and image-based services. The State shall consider policies that:

A. Encourage economic development; [PL 1993, c. 410, Pt. OOO, §1 (NEW).]

B. Employ methods of regulation that encourage the development and deployment of new technologies; and [PL 1993, c. 410, Pt. OOO, §1 (NEW).]

C. Encourage acceptable service applications that support economic development initiatives or otherwise improve the well-being of Maine citizens. [PL 1993, c. 410, Pt. OOO, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 1993, c. 410, Pt. OOO, §1 (NEW).]

3. Report.

[PL 1995, c. 631, §1 (RP); PL 1995, c. 631, §5 (AFF).]

4. Information access. The Legislature further declares and finds that computer-based information services and information networks are important economic and educational resources that should be available to all Maine citizens at affordable rates. It is the policy of the State that affordable access to those information services that require a computer and rely on the use of the telecommunications network should be made available in all communities of the State without regard to geographic location.

[PL 1995, c. 631, §2 (NEW); PL 1995, c. 631, §5 (AFF).]

5. Homeland security and emergency alerts. The Legislature further finds that seamless, integrated, robust and redundant means of communication, including, but not limited to, voice and alphanumeric pagers, landline telephones, wireless telephones, text radio and wireless e-mail, create a robust communication system that enables rapid contact with first responders, ensures emergency alert notification to all affected persons in the State, including at-risk populations such as persons who have hearing loss or visual impairments, and enhances homeland security. It is the policy of the State to encourage the deployment of the infrastructure necessary to support such a communications system.

[PL 2021, c. 348, §53 (AMD).]

6. Prepaid wireless telecommunications services. The Legislature further finds that, because prepaid wireless telecommunications services are provided to consumers without a periodic bill, the collection of fees and surcharges regarding prepaid wireless telecommunications services must be accomplished according to a methodology that differs from the collection of fees and surcharges on other wireless telecommunications services to ensure fairness and competitive neutrality with respect to other telecommunications services provided to consumers of wireless telecommunications services who do receive a periodic bill.

[PL 2011, c. 600, §3 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 600, §10 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 141, §A6 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 410, §0001 (RPR). PL 1993, c. 638, §1 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 631, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 631, §5 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 553, §B1 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 600, §3 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 600, §10 (AFF). PL 2021, c. 348, §53 (AMD).

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