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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION

H. F. No. 2767

03/06/2014 Authored by Johnson, S.,
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Labor, Workplace and Regulated Industries

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to telecommunications; eliminating antiquated, unnecessary, redundant,
1.3 or obsolete laws; making conforming changes; amending Minnesota Statutes
1.4 2012, sections 237.763; 237.773, subdivision 1; repealing Minnesota Statutes
1.5 2012, sections 237.03; 237.068; 237.44; 237.45; 237.57; 237.59, subdivisions
1.6 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10; 237.75.

1.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.8 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2012, section 237.763, is amended to read:

1.9 **237.763 EXEMPTION FROM EARNINGS REGULATION AND**
1.10 **INVESTIGATION.**

1.11 Except as provided in the plan and any subsequent plans, a company that has
1.12 an alternative regulation plan approved under section 237.764, is not subject to the
1.13 rate-of-return regulation or earnings investigations provisions of section 237.075 or
1.14 237.081 during the term of the plan. A company with an approved plan is not subject to
1.15 the provisions of section ~~237.57; 237.59; or~~ 237.60, subdivisions 1, 2, 4, and 5, during the
1.16 term of the plan. Except as specifically provided in this section or in the approved plan, the
1.17 commission retains all of its authority under section 237.081 to investigate other matters
1.18 and to issue appropriate orders, and the department retains its authority under sections
1.19 216A.07 and 237.15 to investigate matters other than the earnings of the company.

1.20 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2012, section 237.773, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.21 Subdivision 1. **Definition.** For purposes of this section, "small telephone company"
1.22 means a local exchange telephone company with fewer than 50,000 subscribers that has
1.23 made an election under subdivision 2 whether or not the company is subject to sections
1.24 ~~237.59 and~~ section 237.60, subdivisions 1, 2, and 5.

2.1 Sec. 3. **REPEALER.**

2.2 Minnesota Statutes 2012, sections 237.03; 237.068; 237.44; 237.45; 237.57; 237.59,
2.3 subdivisions 1, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10; and 237.75, are repealed.

237.03 SCOPE OF LAW.

Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, all the provisions of Revised Laws 1905, chapter 28, and acts amendatory thereof applying to railroad and express companies, shall insofar as the same are applicable apply also to telephone companies.

237.068 MULTIPARTY LINE TELEPHONE SERVICE.

After October 31, 1993, no telephone company may offer or provide multiparty line telephone service to more than two subscribers per line, unless otherwise approved by the commission.

237.44 TELEGRAPH LINE, LIABILITY.

If any person or corporation owning or operating a telegraph line wholly or partly within the state shall fail to transmit any message within a reasonable time, or to exercise due diligence to that end, after its reception, or shall fail to deliver any message to the party to whom it is addressed within a reasonable time after its arrival at the place of destination, the person or corporation shall be liable in a civil action at the suit of the party injured for all damages sustained by reason of such neglect or omission. The company delivering the message shall state plainly thereon the exact time when it was received at the original point for transmission.

237.45 TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH LINES CONSTRUCTED.

Natural persons, copartnerships, and associations may construct, maintain, and operate telephone and telegraph lines, and shall have and possess the same rights, powers, and privileges with reference thereto as corporations formed for such purpose.

237.57 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Scope.** The terms used in this chapter have the meanings given them in this section.

Subd. 2. **Competitive service.** "Competitive service" means a service that has been determined to be subject to effective competition or emerging competition.

Subd. 3. **Effective competition.** "Effective competition" exists when the criteria of section 237.59, subdivision 5, have been satisfied for a service.

Subd. 4. **Emerging competition.** A service will be regulated under "emerging competition" provisions when the criteria of section 237.59, subdivision 5, have not been satisfied, but there is a trend toward effective competition, or if it is a new service offered for the first time after August 1, 1994, that is not integrally related to the provision of adequate telephone service or access to the telephone network or to the privacy, health, or safety of the company's customers, whether or not it meets the criteria of section 237.59, subdivision 5.

Subd. 5. **Local access and transport area.** "Local access and transport area (LATA)" means a geographical area designated by the Modification of Final Judgment in U.S. v. Western Electric Co., Inc., 552 F. Supp. 131 (D.D.C. 1982).

Subd. 6. **Noncompetitive service.** "Noncompetitive service" means a service that has not been classified as competitive by the commission.

237.59 CLASSIFICATION OF COMPETITIVE SERVICE; HEARING.

Subdivision 1. **Emerging competitive service.** (a) The following services provided by the telephone company are subject to emerging competition unless and until reclassified as noncompetitive or subject to effective competition under this section:

- (1) apartment door answering services;
- (2) automatic call distribution;
- (3) billing and collection services;
- (4) call waiting, call forwarding, and three-way calling services for businesses with three or more lines;
- (5) central office-based pricing packages providing switched business access lines which substitute for private branch exchange systems which may or may not share intelligence with customer premises equipment;

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- (6) command link-type services for network reconfiguring to rearrange cross-connections between channel services;
- (7) custom network services and special assemblies;
- (8) Digicom switchnet services for full duplex, synchronous, information transport;
- (9) direct customer access services for telephone number information;
- (10) teleconferencing services;
- (11) inter-LATA and intra-LATA message toll service;
- (12) inter-LATA and intra-LATA private line services;
- (13) inter-LATA and intra-LATA wide area telephone service;
- (14) mobile radio services;
- (15) operator services, excluding local operator services;
- (16) public pay telephone services, excluding charges for access to the central office;
- (17) special construction of facilities;
- (18) systems for automatic dialing; and
- (19) versanet-type service access line involving continuous monitoring and transmission of data from customer's premises to the central office.

(b) A service classified as subject to emerging competition before June 1, 1994, retains that classification unless and until it is reclassified pursuant to subdivision 3 or 10.

Subd. 1a. **CLASS service.** Notwithstanding the terms of subdivision 1, paragraph (b), CLASS services may be classified as competitive services only when so classified according to subdivision 3 or 10.

Subd. 2. **Petition.** (a) A telephone company, or the commission on its own motion, may petition to have a service of that telephone company classified as subject to effective competition or emerging competition. The petition must be served on the commission, the department, the Office of the Attorney General, and any other person designated by the commission. The petition must contain at least:

- (1) a list of the known alternative providers of the service available to the company's customers; and
- (2) a description of affiliate relationships with any other provider of the service in the company's market.

(b) At the time the company first offers a service, it shall also file a petition with the commission for a determination as to how the service should be classified. In the event that no interested party or the commission objects to the company's proposed classification within 20 days of the filing of the petition, the company's proposed classification of the service is deemed approved. If an objection is filed, the commission shall determine the appropriate classification after a hearing conducted pursuant to section 237.61. In either event, the company may offer the new service to its customers ten days after the company files the price list and incremental cost study as provided in section 237.60, subdivision 2, paragraph (f).

(c) A new service may be classified as subject to effective competition or emerging competition pursuant to the criteria set forth in subdivision 5. A new service must be regulated under the emerging competition provisions if it is not integrally related to the provision of adequate local service or access to the telephone network or to the privacy, health, or safety of the company's customers, whether or not it meets the criteria set forth in subdivision 5.

Subd. 3. **Expedited proceeding.** An interested party wishing to contest the change of classification of a service must file an objection with the commission within 20 days after the filing of the petition. If no party files an objection, the service must be reclassified in accordance with the petition. If a petition is contested, a telephone company that is the subject of a petition under subdivision 2 may request that the commission determine the classification of the service through an expedited proceeding under section 237.61 or a contested case hearing. If an expedited proceeding is requested, the commission must provide interested persons an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of the process and the merits of the petition.

When an expedited proceeding is requested, the commission shall make a final determination within 60 days of the date on which all required information required under subdivision 2 is filed, unless during the 60 days the commission finds that a material issue of fact is in dispute, in which case it shall order that a contested case hearing be conducted to evaluate the petition.

Subd. 4. **Contested case hearing.** If a contested case hearing is held under this section, the commission shall make a final determination on the petition within eight months from the date the petitioning party requests a contested case hearing or from the date the commission orders a contested case hearing under subdivision 3. When a contested case hearing is requested in the petition or when the commission acts on its own motion, this deadline may be extended for no more than 60 days by agreement of all parties or by order of the commission if the commission

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finds that the case cannot be completed within the required time and that without an extension there is substantial probability that the public interest will be harmed.

Subd. 5. **Criteria.** (a) If a proposed classification is objected to pursuant to subdivision 2, paragraph (b), on the basis that the service does not meet the criteria of this subdivision, the commission shall consider, in determining whether a service is subject to either effective competition or emerging competition from available alternative service providers, the following factors:

- (1) the number and sizes of alternative providers of service and affiliation to other providers;
- (2) the extent to which services are available from alternative providers in the relevant market;
- (3) the ability of alternative providers to make functionally equivalent or substitute services readily available at competitive rates, terms, and conditions of service;
- (4) the market share, the ability of the market to hold prices close to cost, and other economic measures of market power; and
- (5) the necessity of the service to the well-being of the customer.

(b) In order for the commission to find a service subject to effective competition alternative services must be available to over 50 percent of the company's customers for that service.

(c) In order for the commission to find a service subject to emerging competition alternative services must be available to over 20 percent of the company's customers for that service.

Subd. 6. **Burden of proof.** The classification of a service may not be changed so as to result in lessened regulation unless it is demonstrated by a preponderance of the evidence that the criteria of subdivision 5 have been met.

Subd. 8. **Interim relief.** A telephone company that has a petition pending before the commission under this section to declare a service competitive may decrease its price for that service without notice while the commission considers the petition. A company must provide an incremental cost study if requested by the commission. The commission shall suspend a company's right under this subdivision to decrease rates if, after an expedited hearing conducted under section 237.61, the commission finds that the service is being priced below cost, or that the company has within the previous 12 months charged customers interim rates under this subdivision for the same service, and that service was determined by the commission to be noncompetitive.

Subd. 9. **Reporting requirements; exception.** A telephone company that offers only competitive services is not subject to the accounting and reporting requirements of this chapter unless otherwise ordered by the commission for good cause. A telephone company that offers both competitive and noncompetitive services is not subject to the reporting requirements with regard to its effective competition services unless otherwise ordered by the commission for good cause.

Subd. 10. **Regulation reinstated.** (a) The commission, on its own motion or upon complaint, shall reclassify a service as noncompetitive or as subject to emerging competition and reinstate, in whole or in part, rate regulation of the service if, after notice and hearing, the commission finds either:

(1) that the competitive market for that service, on review of the criteria found in subdivision 5, has failed so that rate regulation of that service is necessary to protect the interest of consumers, that it has considered the alternatives to rate regulation, and that the benefits of rate regulation outweigh the burdens of rate regulation; or

(2) that unreasonable discrimination has occurred between different areas of the state.

(b) In any proceeding to reclassify a service the person initiating the complaint has the burden of proving that the existing classification is inappropriate, except the telephone company providing the service has the burden of proving that the classification is appropriate when the proceeding is commenced by the commission on its own motion or when the complainant is the department or the attorney general.

237.75 CLASS SERVICE.

Subdivision 1. **Definition.** For purposes of this section, "CLASS" or "custom local area signaling service" means a custom calling telephone service that is enabled through the installation or use of Signaling System 7 or similar signaling system and that includes at least the following features:

- (1) automatic call back;
- (2) automatic recall;
- (3) calling number delivery, commonly known as "caller identification";
- (4) calling number delivery blocking;
- (5) customer originated call tracing;

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- (6) distinctive ringing/call waiting;
- (7) selective call acceptance;
- (8) selective call forwarding; and
- (9) selective call rejection.

Subd. 2. **CLASS; terms and conditions.** By January 1, 1994, the commission shall determine the terms and conditions under which CLASS services may be provided by telephone companies in this state.

Subd. 3. **CLASS; capability and offering of service.** Each telephone company that provides local telephone service to persons located in the counties of Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington shall obtain the capability to offer CLASS services in those counties by January 1, 1995, unless the commission approves an extension to a date certain.