
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 408 Session of
1996

INTRODUCED BY RUDY, HANNA, SURRA, KREBS, SAYLOR, BELFANTI,
WAUGH, KUKOVICH, PLATTS, BATTISTO AND PESCI, JUNE 19, 1996

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, JUNE 19, 1996

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and the office
2 of administrative law judge to hold public input hearings
3 regarding Bell Atlantic-Pennsylvania, Inc.'s \$41.6 million
4 restructuring and rebalancing requests for its residence,
5 business and switched access rates on a revenue-neutral
6 basis.

7 WHEREAS, Bell Atlantic has presented a \$41.6 million request
8 to restructure and rebalance its rates for its residence,
9 business and switched access customers in what the
10 telecommunications company describes as a revenue-neutral basis;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Bell Atlantic's request could raise rates for
13 services provided to homes, small businesses, farmers and
14 agricultural-related companies and switched access and various
15 other customers in rural areas where it faces no business
16 competition so the telecommunications company can reduce rates
17 for customers in suburban and urban areas and effectively
18 compete in those areas with other companies; and

19 WHEREAS, The rate restructuring could cause other

1 telecommunications companies serving noncompetitive rural areas
2 to present similar requests to the Pennsylvania Public Utility
3 Commission to rebalance their rates to customers in
4 noncompetitive rural areas so they can lower rates for customers
5 in competitive urban and suburban areas; and

6 WHEREAS, The rate rebalancing request could ultimately lead
7 to the elimination of subsidies of telephone services provided
8 to customers in rural areas by telecommunications companies such
9 as Bell Atlantic, which could raise basic telephone rates in
10 those areas by about 300% from about \$8 monthly to \$25 monthly;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, People and small businesses in rural areas,
13 particularly senior citizens and others on fixed incomes, depend
14 heavily on their telephone service as a lifeline for emergency
15 and other services and have fewer resources to pay for higher
16 telephone rates; and

17 WHEREAS, The office of administrative law judge has scheduled
18 13 public input hearings in locations in Warren, Sharon,
19 Uniontown, Pittsburgh, Allentown, Media, Reading and
20 Philadelphia; and

21 WHEREAS; None of those hearings are scheduled in the greater
22 part of north-central or south-central Pennsylvania regions,
23 which encompass the vast majority of this Commonwealth's rural
24 areas and populations and could thus weight any testimony toward
25 Bell Atlantic's request to allow rates in rural areas to
26 increase and make up for revenues lost by lowering rates in
27 urban and suburban areas; and

28 WHEREAS, Although Pennsylvania has the largest rural
29 population in the nation with about four million of its
30 residents living in rural areas, only one of the eight locations

1 for the public input hearings will be held in a rural area,
2 Warren, the most northern and western area of what could be
3 considered central Pennsylvania; and

4 WHEREAS, Holding no hearings in the greater area of north-
5 central and south-central Pennsylvania will put a great burden
6 on residents in those areas who wish to participate in the
7 hearings because they will have to travel great distances to
8 have their voices heard at a public hearing; and

9 WHEREAS, The people living in north-central and south-central
10 regions and the rural areas in general deserve a fair and equal
11 opportunity to let the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
12 know how this rate increase could hurt their lives and jobs;
13 therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the
15 Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and its office of
16 administrative law judge to schedule public input hearings in
17 north-central and south-central Pennsylvania to ensure
18 residents, small businesses, farmers and others in rural regions
19 have an equal and fair opportunity to share their thoughts on
20 Bell Atlantic's rate restructuring and rebalancing request; and
21 be it further

22 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be forwarded to the
23 Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and Administrative Law
24 Judge Louis Cocheres.