

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6626

As of January 26, 1998

Title: An act relating to digital broadband internet access and transport services.

Brief Description: Clarifying the regulatory authority of the utilities and transportation commission with regard to internet services and digital broadband technologies.

Sponsors: Senators Finkbeiner, Brown, Swecker, Sellar, Oke, T. Sheldon, Anderson, Zarelli, Hale, Deccio, Rasmussen, Rossi, Schow, McCaslin, McDonald, Johnson and West.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Energy & Utilities: 1/27/98.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Staff: Karen Kirkpatrick (786-7403)

Background: Internet services and digital broadband technologies refer generally to simultaneous voice, high-speed data, and video communication capabilities provided over a network of computers.

These services are not currently regulated unless provided by a Local Exchange Carrier (LEC). LECs are subject to regulation by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC). They must file a tariff or, if classified as a competitive telecommunications company, a price list.

It has been suggested by some that this regulation is unnecessary and that sufficient competition exists for these services.

Summary of Bill: Internet services and digital broadband technologies are exempt from regulation by WUTC.

Digital broadband technologies is defined to include packet/cell switched, transmission control protocol/internet protocol (TCP/IP), digital subscriber loop (DSL), frame relay, and asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) technologies.

Internet services are similarly defined to include all services provided through technologies that support the internet, including those listed above, as well as access to the internet or offload and transport.

The exemption of one-way transmissions of television or radio signals is extended to two-way broadcasts or transmissions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.