

Technology & Economic Development Committee

HB 2664

Brief Description: Extending existing telecommunications authority to all ports in Washington state in order to facilitate public-private partnerships in wholesale telecommunications services and infrastructure.

Sponsors: Representatives Dye, Doglio, Jenkin, Chapman, Vick, Stonier, Wylie and Walsh.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends existing telecommunications authorities of rural port districts to all port districts.

Hearing Date: 1/30/18

Staff: Lily Smith (786-7175).

Background:

A rural port district in existence on June 8, 2000, may acquire and operate telecommunications facilities for its own internal telecommunications needs within and outside of the district, and to provide wholesale telecommunications services within the district limits.

Rural port districts providing wholesale services must:

- ensure that their rates, terms, and conditions are not unduly or unreasonably discriminatory or preferential;
- keep accountings of revenues and expenditures of their wholesale telecommunications activities separate from their internal telecommunications operations;
- dedicate the revenues from the wholesale activities to paying off the costs incurred in building and maintaining the telecommunications facilities; and
- charge themselves the true and full value of telecommunications services provided by their separate telecommunications functions to the district.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A rural port district may not charge preferential or discriminatory rates to its non-telecommunications operations or exercise powers of eminent domain to acquire telecommunications facilities or contractual rights to such facilities.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) is authorized to regulate in the public interest the rates, services, facilities, and practices of all persons supplying a utility service within the state. A recipient of wholesale telecommunications services from a rural port district may petition the UTC if it believes the district's rates, terms, and conditions are unduly or unreasonably discriminatory or preferential.

A rural port district is one that is located in a county with an average population density of less than 100 persons per square mile.

Summary of Bill:

The authority to acquire and operate telecommunications facilities for: (1) the district's own use; and (2) the provision of wholesale telecommunications services within the district limits, is extended to all port districts in existence on June 8, 2000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.