
HOUSE BILL 2201

State of Washington 52nd Legislature 1991 Regular Session

By Representatives Wood, Beck, H. Myers, Wilson, Prentice, Paris, Heavey and Neher.

Read first time April 17, 1991. Referred to Committee on Housing.

1 AN ACT Relating to multiple dwelling units' tenants' access to
2 cable television systems; and adding new sections to chapter 59.18 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes the vital
5 role of cable television in the flow of information within the state
6 and agrees that it is in the public interest that cable television be
7 available to as many of its citizens as possible. It further declares
8 that it is in the public interest to assure citizens who reside in
9 apartments and other tenants of leased residential dwellings access to
10 cable television services of a quality and cost comparable to services
11 available to residents living in personally owned dwellings. It is the
12 legislature's intent that the public interest is best served in
13 affording apartment and multi-unit tenants' leased dwellings the
14 opportunity to obtain cable television services of their own choice and
15 to prevent landlords from treating the residents and tenants as a

1 captive market for the sale of television reception services selected
2 or provided by the landlord.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** For the purposes of sections 1 through
4 12 of this act:

5 (1) "CATV system" or "cable television system" means a system or
6 facility, or part thereof, which consists of a set of transmission
7 paths and associated signal generation, reception, amplification, and
8 control equipment that is operated or intended to be operated to
9 perform the service of receiving and amplifying the distributing and
10 redistribution signals broadcast or transmitted by one or more
11 television or radio stations or information distribution service
12 companies, including, but not limited to, the cable communications
13 system owner, operator, or manager itself, to subscribers. The terms
14 include the service of distributing any video, audio, digital, light,
15 or audio-video signals, whether broadcast or otherwise.

16 (2) "Holding a franchise" means obtaining municipal consent or
17 approval to construct or operate a CATV system and render CATV system
18 services whether granted by resolution, ordinance, or written
19 agreement. The term includes a person who has constructed and is
20 operating a CATV system within the public right of way of a
21 municipality which at the time of construction and initial operation
22 of the CATV system did not require that municipal consent be obtained.

23 (3) "Landlord" means any individual or entity owning, controlling,
24 leasing, operating, or managing multiple dwelling premises.

25 (4) "Multiple dwelling premises" means any area occupied by
26 dwelling units, appurtenances thereto, grounds, and facilities, which
27 dwelling units are intended or designed to be occupied or leased for
28 occupation, or actually occupied, as individual homes or residences for
29 three or more households. The term includes mobile home parks.

1 (5) "Operator" means the operator of a CATV system holding a
2 franchise granted by the municipality or municipalities in which the
3 multiple dwelling premises to be served is located.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A landlord may not discriminate in
5 rental or other charges between tenants who subscribe to the services
6 of a CATV system and those who do not. The landlord may, however,
7 require reasonable compensation in exchange for a permanent taking of
8 his or her property resulting from the installation of CATV system
9 facilities within and upon his or her multiple dwelling premises, to be
10 paid by the operator. The compensation shall be determined in
11 accordance with section 7 of this act.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A tenant has the right to request and
13 receive cable television services from an operator or a landlord
14 provided that there has been an agreement between a landlord and an
15 operator through the negotiation process outlined in section 5 of this
16 act or through a ruling of an arbitrator as provided for in section 7
17 of this act. A landlord may not prohibit or otherwise prevent a tenant
18 from requesting or acquiring cable television service from an operator
19 of the tenant's choice provided that there has been an agreement
20 between a landlord and an operator through the negotiation process
21 outlined in section 5 of this act or through a ruling of an arbitrator
22 as provided for in section 7 of this act. A landlord may not prevent
23 an operator from entering such premises for the purposes of
24 constructing, reconstructing, installing, servicing or repairing CATV
25 system facilities or maintaining cable television services if a tenant
26 of a multiple dwelling premise has requested such cable television
27 services and if the operator complies with sections 3 through 11 of
28 this act. The operator shall retain ownership of all wiring or

1 equipment used in any installation or upgrade of a CATV system in
2 multiple dwelling premises. An operator shall not provide cable
3 television services to an individual dwelling unit unless permission
4 has been given by or received from the tenant occupying the unit.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** An operator shall notify the landlord,
6 in writing, within ten days after the operator decides to provide cable
7 television services if a tenant of a multiple dwelling premises
8 requests the operator to provide cable television services, and if the
9 operator decides that it will provide the services. If the operator
10 fails to provide the notice, then the tenant's request shall be
11 terminated. If the operator agrees to provide the cable television
12 services, then a forty-five day period of negotiation between the
13 landlord and the operator shall be commenced. This original notice
14 shall state as follows: "The landlord, tenants, and operators have
15 rights granted under sections 1 through 11 of this act, known as "the
16 landlord and tenant cable television act." The original notice shall
17 be accompanied by a proposal outlining the nature of the work to be
18 performed and including an offer of compensation for loss in value of
19 property given in exchange for the permanent installation of CATV
20 system facilities. The proposal also shall include a statement that
21 the operator is liable to the landlord for any physical damage, set
22 forth the means by which the operator will comply with the installation
23 requirements of the landlord under section 6 of this act, and state the
24 time period for installation and security to be provided. The landlord
25 may waive his or her right to security at any time in the negotiation
26 process.

27 During the forty-five day negotiation period, the landlord and the
28 operator shall attempt to reach an agreement concerning the terms upon
29 which cable television services shall be provided. If, within the

1 forty-five day period or at any time thereafter, the proposal results
2 in an agreement between the landlord and the operator, cable television
3 services shall be provided in accordance with the agreement. If, at
4 the end of the forty-five day period, the proposal does not result in
5 an agreement between the landlord and the operator, then section 7 of
6 this act shall apply. The right of a tenant to receive cable
7 television service may not be delayed beyond the forty-five day period
8 contained in the original notice or otherwise impaired unless the
9 matter proceeds to arbitration or court as provided in sections 7 and
10 8 of this act. An operator may bring a civil action to enforce the
11 right of cable television services installation under sections 1
12 through 12 of this act.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** An operator is liable to the landlord
14 for any physical damage caused by the installation, operation, or
15 removal of CATV system facilities. A landlord may require that the
16 installation of a cable television system conforms to reasonable
17 conditions necessary to protect the safety, function, and appearance of
18 the premises, and the convenience and well-being of tenants. A
19 landlord may also require that the installation of a cable television
20 system conforms to reasonable requirements as to the location of main
21 cable connections to the premises, the routing of cable lines through
22 the premises, and the overall appearance of the finished installation.
23 The operator shall locate the entry of a main cable connection to the
24 premises at the same location as the entry into the premises of public
25 utility connections, to the extent possible. A second or subsequent
26 installation of a cable television system, if any, shall conform to
27 such reasonable requirements in a way that minimizes further physical
28 intrusion to or through the premises.

1 once commenced, shall be concluded and a written decision by the
2 arbitrator shall be rendered within fourteen days of commencement.
3 Judgment upon any award may be entered in any court having
4 jurisdiction.

5 (d) Within thirty days of the date of the notice of the decision of
6 the arbitrators, either party may appeal the decision of the
7 arbitrators to the superior court regarding the amount awarded as
8 compensation for loss of value or for physical damages to the property.
9 During the pendency of an appeal, the operator may not enter the
10 multiple dwelling premises to provide cable television services, except
11 as to those units that have existing cable television services. The
12 court shall order each party to pay one-half of the arbitration costs.
13 Reviews of arbitration decisions shall be limited to the record and
14 findings established by the arbitrators.

15 (3) In determining reasonable compensation, evidence that a
16 landlord has a specific alternative use for the space occupied or to be
17 occupied by CATV system facilities, the loss of which will result in a
18 monetary loss to the owner, or that installation of CATV system
19 facilities upon such multiple dwelling premises will otherwise
20 substantially interfere with the use and occupancy of such premises to
21 an extent which causes a decrease in the resale or rental value thereof
22 shall be considered. In determining the damages to any landlord in an
23 action under this section, compensation shall be measured by the loss
24 in value of the landlord's property. An amount representing increase
25 in value of the property occurring by reason of the installation of
26 CATV system facilities shall be deducted from the compensation.

27 (4) The time periods in this section may be extended by mutual
28 agreement between the landlord and the operator.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** The superior court of the county in
2 which the multiple dwelling premises or a part thereof is located shall
3 have venue of all actions to enforce the provisions of sections 1
4 through 12 of this act or to hear any appeal from the award of
5 arbitrators or any dispute between the parties.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** Nothing in sections 1 through 12 of this
7 act precludes a landlord from offering alternative cable television
8 services to tenants provided that the provisions of sections 1 through
9 12 of this act are not violated.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** The operator shall comply with all
11 federal, state, or local statutes, rules, regulations, or ordinances
12 with respect to buildings located in historical districts. Nothing in
13 sections 1 through 12 of this act may be construed as preventing,
14 precluding, or restricting any political subdivision of the state from
15 regulating cable television as may now be provided by law.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** Cable television services being provided
17 to tenants in multiple dwelling premises on the effective date of this
18 section may not be prohibited or otherwise prevented so long as the
19 tenant in an individual dwelling unit continues to request the
20 services.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** This act may be known and cited as the
22 landlord and tenant cable television act.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** Sections 1 through 12 of this act are
24 each added to chapter 59.18 RCW.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** If any provision of this act or its
2 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the
3 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other
4 persons or circumstances is not affected.