



## Member Alert

March 7, 2006

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### House Committee Passes HB 337

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In a special meeting this morning, the House Tourism Development and Energy Committee passed a committee substitute to **HB 337**, a telecom regulatory reform bill called the *Emerging Technology and Consumer Choice Act of 2006*, in a 15-1 vote. Committee chairman Eddie Ballard (D-Madisonville) had called the special meeting during the House session Monday afternoon.

At the meeting, supporters and opponents were each given 10 minutes to address the merits of the bill and the final changes made over the last several days. Although the parties failed to reach a consensus bill, all agreed that the committee substitute bill addressed many outstanding issues. Some opponents remained fundamentally opposed to any deregulation. Co-sponsor Rep. Scott Brinkman (R-Louisville) spoke for the bill while Assistant Attorney General Dennis Howard spoke for the opponents. The PSC attended but did not speak. After a few questions and some discussion the committee voted a solid 15-1 to pass the bill out of committee. Several members did express disappointment that a compromise could not be reached and urged the parties to continue to meet.

The bill now goes to the House floor where the opponents are again expected to mount a public relations campaign against the bill. Telecom supporters will continue to work with legislators to seek a floor vote this week. Two additional sponsors have been added to the bill for a total of 49 of the 100 house members.

The premise of the bill is the recognition that effective competition exists in the state telecommunications marketplace and that consumers should be allowed to benefit from the products and services provided by all competitors. While basic service will remain under the PSC, rates for non-basic services, including bundles and packages of services will be subject to the competitive marketplace only. The bill applies equally to all telecom providers to encourage investment in modern infrastructure and the provision of new and innovative product and service offerings, promotions and packages in the competitive marketplace.

**ACTION REQUEST:** *Contact your legislator as soon as possible and ask them to vote for HB 337 on the House floor. If they are a sponsor, don't forget to thank them for sponsoring the bill. Call them in Frankfort at 800/372-7181 (legislators' message line) or 502/564-8100 (LRC office, and ask to be connected directly to their office).*

*It is important that legislators hear from their local constituents supporting the bill. At this time in the session, they have heard the story from lobbyists and opponents and, frankly, may have some doubts on the level of local support – if they are not hearing directly from supporters in their own districts.*

This is an email publication by the Kentucky Telephone Association for the benefit and information for its members and friends. Send questions and comments to [Forest M. Skaggs](mailto:Forest.M.Skaggs@ktaoffice.org), Executive Director. KTA office: 851 Corporate Drive Suite 105, Lexington, KY 40503. Tel – 859/223-9001, Fax – 859/223-2601, [www.ktaoffice.org](http://www.ktaoffice.org).