

**CHAPTER 685**

**(House Bill 565)**

AN ACT concerning

**Public Service Commission – Telephone Companies – Directory Assistance Calls**

FOR the purpose of reducing the number of calls to directory assistance made by residential customers upon which the Public Service Commission is prohibited from levying charges; authorizing the Public Service Commission to allow telephone companies to levy charges for certain directory assistance calls; setting certain standards relating to those charges; repealing certain rate adjustments for telephone companies; and generally relating to charges levied by telephone companies.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
Article 78 – Public Service Commission Law  
Section 68  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(1995 Replacement Volume)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article 78 – Public Service Commission Law**

68.

(a) The Commission shall have the power to determine just and reasonable rates of public service companies, whether as maximum, minimum or maximum and minimum, respectively. The rates so determined shall be fixed by order to be served upon each public service company affected thereby. This subsection does not apply to small rural electric cooperatives.

(b) (1) The Commission may ~~not~~ authorize telephone company charges to be levied for directory assistance calls ~~made by residential customers upon the first 6 2 calls made to directory assistance from each residential service per monthly billing cycle~~. THE COMMISSION MAY AUTHORIZE CHARGES ON OTHER DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE CALLS IF THE COMMISSION FINDS, AFTER NOTICE AND EVIDENTIARY HEARING, THAT SUCH CHARGES PROTECT CONSUMERS BY PROVIDING AFFORDABLE AND REASONABLY PRICED DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE SERVICE, ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETITION, AND ARE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

(2) [In order to determine just and reasonable rates for residential telephone service, the Commission shall adjust the residential telephone rates of a telephone company that it considers appropriate to provide the same net operating income that the telephone company would realize if no charges were levied on the first 12 calls made to directory assistance under paragraph (1) of this subsection.