

A.563 (Paulin)

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BILL A.563 (Paulin)
SUBJECT Requiring Notices to be Provided to Customers Receiving service Through Fiber Optic-Based Telephone Lines
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OPPOSE

The Business Council of New York State, the State's leading statewide business and industry association, opposes this legislation that would amend the Public Service Law by requiring regulated telephone-service providers to give at least 45 days' notice before migrating their service from copper-based telephone lines to fiber optic-based lines.

The expansion of fiber optics in the delivery of telephone service has been well underway for years. Fiber offers many beneficial aspects as compared with old fashion copper lines. Fiber is immune from many of the environmental issues that plague copper lines and cause their deterioration. As compared to copper lines, fiber is lighter in weight and size, more energy efficient, carries signals at greater speed, and can offer more extensive services.

The migration to fiber is being undertaken by phone companies for a number of purposes - including compliance, as in migration under Federal Communications Commission orders. In the case of replacement, it should be noted that there are no adverse impacts on the calling features on fiber optic as compared with old copper lines. All the services used by customers - home alarms, fax service, monitoring devices and 911, to name only a few - continue under fiber lines.

It should also be noted that in the case of planned replacement, customers are given advance notice of replacement through letters, phone calls, automated message, and follow-ups from customer service. Provisions governing loss of power and battery options for customers in advance of outages also follow a prescribed customer-friendly process in order to maintain calling options - often for extended periods of time. Providers take great pains to educate the consumer in the areas of battery backup and migration from copper to fiber. In a sense, the bill is unnecessary and redundant of current practices already employed by telephone companies migrating to fiber-optic lines.

For the above reasons, The Business Council opposes this legislation.

