

Testimony in Support of HB 1608, "The Telecommunications Market Competition Legislation"
Tom McCall
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My name is Tom McCall. I am an IT consultant based in Carbon County. I would like to express my support for HB 1608, the Telecommunications Market Competition bill.

The technological advances that have taken place in the telecommunications sector have fundamentally changed how we communicate and conduct business today. Cutting-edge technologies like wireless and broadband have revolutionized operations, increased efficiencies and expanded mobility by bringing the world to our fingertips.

Because I work in the tech sector, I am especially grateful for the progress that has occurred. My job truly depends on the investments telecommunications companies have made to enhance our state's communications infrastructure. That is why it is so important to update state regulations of this industry to encourage telecommunications companies to continue innovating and investing here.

It simply makes no sense to keep rotary phone era rules in place when people are hanging up on that technology. The number of U.S. telephone landlines, which peaked at 186 million in 2000, has steadily declined for more than a decade. Here in Pennsylvania, more than 4 million landlines have been disconnected. These numbers prove that wireless and broadband networks – not an outmoded copper system - are fueling the growth of our economy and meeting consumer demand.

Given these market changes, it is imperative that the Legislature modernize old rules to reflect the environment today. Traditional telecommunications companies must be freed from unnecessary red tape so they can compete, invest and innovate on par with other non-regulated players in the industry, like cable providers and wireless companies. If we do not overhaul the current regulatory environment, consumers and businesses stand to lose the full potential this industry has to offer.

The telecommunications industry is vital to our state's economy and business community. Keeping this industry alive and thriving is something we are all equally invested in and is why I hope you will recognize the need to change the way telecommunications companies are regulated. Instituting government policies that promote competition and reduce outdated layers of regulation is an important step in the right direction.

Please support HB 1608 and move this bill to the full House for consideration. Thank you for considering my views.