

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/SB 478 — Designation of Eligible Telecommunications Carriers

by Regulated Industries Committee and Senator Rodriguez

The bill amends s. 364.10, F.S., to expand the entities that the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) may designate as Eligible Telecommunication Carriers (ETCs) for the limited purpose of providing federal Lifeline program service to include:

- Telecommunications companies; and
- Commercial mobile radio service providers (i.e., mobile phone service providers).

This change maintains the PSC's current ability to grant Lifeline program ETC status to telecommunications companies currently under its jurisdiction, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. 214(e). The bill grants authority to the PSC to grant ETC status, for the sole purpose of providing Lifeline service, to commercial mobile radio service providers, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. 214(e). These providers are currently exempt from the PSC's jurisdiction and will continue to hold that exemption except for determination as an ETC for participation in the Lifeline service.

Mobile phone service providers that wish to participate in the Connect America (i.e., High-Cost Support) program will still need to petition the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for ETC designation for that program. Additionally, providers that use other technologies that are exempt from the PSC's jurisdiction, such as satellite or Voice over Internet Protocol, would continue to require ETC designation from the FCC to participate in the Lifeline or Connect America programs.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0