

CHAPTER 97

AN ACT concerning cable television service outages and amending P.L.1987, c.422 and P.L.1999, c.43.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 1 of P.L.1987, c.422 (C.48:5A-11a) is amended to read as follows:

C.48:5A-11a Cable TV outages.

1. a. The director, with the approval of the board, shall adopt rules and regulations providing for a credit or rebate for outages of cable television service which are six or more hours in duration. The amount of the credit or rebate shall be in one day units, prorated on the basis of the subscriber's monthly rate for each service so interrupted. In order to obtain a credit or rebate, a subscriber shall notify by telephone or in writing the cable television company, the Office of Cable Television or other designated complaint officer within 30 days after any such outage. The regulations may provide for appropriate exceptions and limitations.

b. The director shall permit any cable television company that has a service outage lasting six or more hours in duration, to provide to its subscribers other forms of compensation, in lieu of a credit or rebate, to compensate subscribers for the loss of service caused by the outage. Nothing in this section shall authorize a cable television company to require a subscriber to accept an alternative form of compensation in lieu of a credit or rebate to which the subscriber is entitled pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

2. Section 1 of P.L.1999, c.43 (C.48:5A-11b) is amended to read as follows:

C.48:5A-11b Notices to subscribers.

1. a. Notice to subscribers of refund liability and ordered rate decreases shall commence concurrent with subscriber credits within the next billing cycle following approval of the refund liability statement by the appropriate agency, whether the Board of Public Utilities for basic rates, or the Federal Communications Commission for cable programming service rates.

b. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection a. of this section, or any other law, rule, regulation, or order to the contrary, the director shall not require any cable television company to provide its subscribers with periodic written notice of the procedures for obtaining credits, rebates, or other forms of compensation as reimbursement for service outages lasting six or more hours in duration if the company provides that information in an electronic format on its Internet website in a manner that reasonably conveys the content of the periodic written notices, and allows its subscribers to thereafter make informed decisions concerning compensation for service outages.

c. Any cable television company that provides notice electronically on its Internet website in lieu of sending periodic written notices to its subscribers, pursuant to subsection b. of this section, shall offer the option to each of its subscribers to continue receiving periodic notices in written form on at least an annual basis.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 7, 2013.