

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 3, 2016
AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 26, 2016
AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 12, 2016
AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 28, 2016

SENATE BILL

No. 1212

Introduced by Senator Hueso

February 18, 2016

An act to amend Section 280 of the Public Utilities Code, relating to telecommunications.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1212, as amended, Hueso. "2-1-1" information and referral network.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities, including telephone corporations. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), pursuant to its existing authority over the North American Numbering Plan, has established several abbreviated dialing codes, including designating the number 9-1-1 for persons to dial to obtain emergency services, designating the number 3-1-1 for persons to dial for nonemergency police assistance, and designating the number 2-1-1 for persons to dial to obtain information about, and referral to, community social services. Pursuant to authority delegated by the FCC to state regulatory bodies and its existing statutory authority, the Public Utilities Commission has established procedures for implementing 2-1-1 dialing in California.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to facilitate the expansion of 2-1-1 services into those counties in California where they are lacking and to support a comprehensive statewide database that will

connect all callers to information and referrals they need. The bill would additionally state the intent of the Legislature to facilitate access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information, and referral services, uniformly in the state, especially in hard-to-serve rural areas, through a universally available telephone service. ~~The bill would authorize moneys appropriated to the Public Utilities Commission to be expended to help close telephone service gaps in counties lacking access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information, and referral services, through a universally available high-quality basic telephone service to all residents of California regardless of region, if the Public Utilities Commission determines that doing so is an appropriate use of funds collected from ratepayers. The bill would additionally authorize moneys appropriated to the Public Utilities Commission to be used to fund and improve a coordinated, publicly owned database to provide regional referrals to help with all aspects of disaster planning, recovery, and response, if the Public Utilities Commission determines that doing so is an appropriate use of funds collected from ratepayers.~~

Existing law requires the commission to develop, implement, and administer a program to advance universal service by providing discounted rates to qualifying schools, community colleges, libraries, hospitals, health clinics, and community organizations. Existing law requires that all revenues collected by telephone corporations in rates authorized by the commission to fund this program be deposited in the California Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee Fund. Existing law provides that moneys in the fund are held in trust and may be expended only upon appropriation in the annual Budget Act or upon supplemental appropriation and requires that all moneys appropriated to the commission from the fund be used exclusively for the program.

This bill would, until January 1, 2023, authorize the commission to expend up to \$1,500,000 from the fund to help close 2-1-1 service gaps in counties lacking access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information and referral services, where technically feasible, through available 2-1-1 service.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (1) In order to create a statewide disaster preparedness, response,
4 and recovery system and to facilitate the reach of local services to
5 vulnerable populations, this act is established to expand 2-1-1
6 services to all areas of California that do not currently have access
7 to this vital service.

8 (2) 2-1-1 service is a free, accessible, three-digit telephone
9 number that gives everyone in covered areas access to needed
10 community services. First established in 2005, 2-1-1 service now
11 covers 38 California counties. It is available 24 hours a day, seven
12 days a week, allowing residents to access information about health
13 and human services, emergency care, crisis intervention, and
14 disaster preparedness, response, and recovery when they need it
15 most.

16 (3) 2-1-1 service is a natural hub for disaster-related information
17 and plays a critical role during emergencies and disasters, such as
18 fires, floods, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, and epidemics, reducing
19 nonemergency call volume on 9-1-1 lines, which frees up
20 emergency responders to deal with true life-or-death situations,
21 thus leveraging local public safety resources.

22 (4) 2-1-1 service also increases the reach of government,
23 nonprofit, and community programs by offering callers information
24 on and access to a variety of health and human services, rent and
25 utility assistance, physical and mental health resources,
26 employment opportunities, support for older Americans and
27 persons with disabilities, and support for families with special
28 needs.

29 (5) 2-1-1 service call centers are staffed with highly trained
30 specialists who have expertise in navigating the web of health and
31 human services in a particular community and who have up-to-date
32 information and guidance for callers in times of disaster.

33 (6) 2-1-1 service call center specialists are able to answer calls
34 in over 150 different languages; they are able to provide critical
35 health information to otherwise hard-to-reach ethnic populations.

36 (7) Twenty rural counties in California currently do not have
37 access to 2-1-1 services, creating holes in referral services and
38 disaster response capability.

1 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting this act, to
2 facilitate the expansion of 2-1-1 services into those counties in
3 California where they are lacking and to support a comprehensive
4 statewide database that will connect all callers to the information
5 and referrals they need.

6 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature to facilitate access to disaster
7 preparedness, response, and recovery information, and referral
8 services, uniformly in the state, especially in hard-to-serve rural
9 areas, through a universally available 2-1-1 telephone service.

10 ~~(d) If the commission determines that doing so is an appropriate~~
11 ~~use of funds collected from ratepayers, moneys appropriated to~~
12 ~~the Public Utilities Commission may be expended to help close~~
13 ~~telephone service gaps in counties lacking access to disaster~~
14 ~~preparedness, response, and recovery information, and referral~~
15 ~~services, through a universally available, high-quality basic 2-1-1~~
16 ~~telephone service to all residents of California regardless of region.~~
17 ~~If the commission determines that doing so is an appropriate use~~
18 ~~of funds collected from ratepayers, moneys appropriated to the~~
19 ~~Public Utilities Commission may also be used to fund and improve~~
20 ~~a coordinated, publicly owned database to provide regional referrals~~
21 ~~to help with all aspects of disaster planning, recovery, and response.~~

22 *SEC. 2. Section 280 of the Public Utilities Code is amended*
23 *to read:*

24 280. (a) The commission shall develop, implement, and
25 administer a program to advance universal service by providing
26 discounted rates to qualifying schools maintaining kindergarten
27 or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, community colleges, libraries,
28 hospitals, health clinics, and community organizations, consistent
29 with Chapter 278 of the Statutes of 1994.

30 (b) There is hereby created the California Teleconnect Fund
31 Administrative Committee, which is an advisory board to advise
32 the commission regarding the development, implementation, and
33 administration of a program to advance universal service by
34 providing discounted rates to qualifying schools maintaining
35 kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, community
36 colleges, libraries, hospitals, health clinics, and community
37 organizations, consistent with Chapter 278 of the Statutes of 1994,
38 and to carry out the program pursuant to the commission's
39 direction, control, and approval.

1 (c) All revenues collected by ~~telephone corporations~~ *voice*
2 *communications providers* in rates authorized by the commission
3 to fund the program specified in subdivision (a) shall be submitted
4 to the commission pursuant to a schedule established by the
5 commission. The commission shall transfer the moneys received
6 to the Controller for deposit in the California Teleconnect Fund
7 Administrative Committee Fund. All interest earned by moneys
8 in the fund shall be deposited in the fund.

9 (d) ~~Moneys~~ *Except as provided in subdivisions (e) and (g),*
10 *moneys* appropriated from the California Teleconnect Fund
11 Administrative Committee Fund to the commission shall be utilized
12 exclusively by the commission for the program specified in
13 subdivision (a), including all costs of the board and the commission
14 associated with the administration and oversight of the program
15 and the fund.

16 (e) Moneys loaned from the California Teleconnect Fund
17 Administrative Committee Fund in the Budget Act of 2003 are
18 subject to Section 16320 of the Government Code. If the
19 commission determines a need for moneys in the California
20 Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee Fund, the commission
21 shall notify the Director of Finance of the need, as specified in
22 Section 16320 of the Government Code. The commission may not
23 increase the rates authorized by the commission to fund the
24 program specified in subdivision (b) while moneys loaned from
25 the California Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee Fund
26 in the Budget Act of 2003 are outstanding unless both of the
27 following conditions are satisfied:

28 (1) The Director of Finance, after making a determination
29 pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 16320 of the Government
30 Code, does not order repayment of all or a portion of any loan
31 from the California Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee
32 Fund within 30 days of notification by the commission of the need
33 for the moneys.

34 (2) The commission notifies the Director of Finance and the
35 Chairperson of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in writing
36 that it intends to increase the rates authorized by the commission
37 to fund the program specified in subdivision (a). The notification
38 required pursuant to this paragraph shall be made 30 days in
39 advance of the intended rate increase.

1 (f) Subdivision (e) shall become inoperative upon full repayment
2 or discharge of all moneys loaned from the California Teleconnect
3 Fund Administrative Committee Fund in the Budget Act of 2003.
4 (g) (1) *Consistent with Decision 10-06-002 (June 7, 2010)*
5 *Decision Granting Petition for Rulemaking and Order Instituting*
6 *Rulemaking as to Whether to Enable Emergency Access to 211*
7 *Services in Counties and Localities Without Existing 211 Centers,*
8 *as modified in Decision 10-12-060 (December 20, 2016), the*
9 *commission may expend up to one million five hundred thousand*
10 *dollars (\$1,500,000) from the California Teleconnect Fund*
11 *Administrative Committee Fund to help close 2-1-1 service gaps*
12 *in counties lacking access to disaster preparedness, response, and*
13 *recovery information and referral services, where technically*
14 *feasible, through available 2-1-1 service. One-time costs may*
15 *include implementation of a coordinated publicly owned database*
16 *to provide referrals to help with nonemergency aspects of disaster*
17 *planning, recovery, and response.*
18 (2) *This subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1,*
19 *2023.*