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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sSB 278**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING FEES PAID TO COMPANIES OR ORGANIZATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMMUNITY ACCESS PROGRAMMING.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill expands the types of subscribers who must pay the fee that helps support community access TV operations to include those who subscribe to internet access and video streaming services from multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs) (i.e., cable TV providers). Under the bill, “video streaming” is the delivery of video content sent in compressed form over the internet and displayed by the viewer in real time for a fee on a subscription basis.

Existing law, unchanged by the bill, sets the fee at \$5 per subscriber (adjusted annually for inflation since 1995) and allows the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to adjust it based on factors such as the level of community interest in public access and the adequacy of public access facilities, equipment, and training programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

#### **COVERED SUBSCRIBERS**

Current law requires MVPD subscribers to pay an annual community access fee to help support community access TV operations; however, it does not define these subscribers or the services to which they subscribe. In practice, the fee is charged to cable TV subscribers.

The bill defines a subscriber as any residential or commercial customer who purchases video streaming services, internet access services, or cable TV services. In doing so, it requires those who subscribe to an MVPD for video streaming or internet access services to also pay the community access fee. However, the bill also specifies that for anyone who subscribes to more than one of the three services, the

community access operator that receives the fees must only receive one payment from the subscriber (e.g., someone who receives cable TV and internet service from an MVPD cannot be charged the fee twice).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 24 Nay 2 (03/22/2022)