



# California Public Utilities Commission

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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **PUC COMMISSIONERS WOOD AND BROWN COMMENT ON REVISED TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL OF RIGHTS DRAFT**

SAN FRANCISCO, March 2, 2004 – The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) today issued a revised Draft Decision for the Telecommunications Consumer Bill of Rights (BOR).

The proposed BOR details the fundamental consumer rights that all communications service providers must respect, as well as a set of consumer protection rules all carriers must follow to protect those rights.

“The revised version of the Bill of Rights was created in consultation with Commissioner Brown and his advisors and it offers consumers protections that they need and deserve,” said Commissioner Carl Wood, sponsor of the BOR. “Commissioner Brown greatly improved the Bill of Rights by applying his legal expertise and understanding of policy issues in the telecommunications marketplace.”

“We have produced a Bill of Rights that tightens up the prior rules but does not weaken or diminish consumer protections,” said Commissioner Geoffrey F. Brown. “The revisions to the proposed rules are based on further discussions held with consumer groups, telecommunications industry representatives, and the California Attorney General’s Office. This was a true collaboration and I am grateful to Commissioner Wood for the opportunity to work with him on this important initiative.”

The revisions to the BOR include:

- Rules governing marketing and solicitations are revised to reflect current fair competition and consumer protection laws.
- Contract rules now allow brochures to become part of the service agreement terms, but brochures must be referenced as, or incorporated into, the service agreement. Service agreements, including brochures, must be in a minimum of 10-point type.

- The “no hassle” return rule remains, but is simplified to be 30 days from the date that the subscriber activates service.
- Disclosure rules require that carriers provide to subscribers the terms of their contract.
- The privacy rules have been revised to incorporate the Federal Communications Commission’s privacy rules. However, written permission is still required before confidential information about subscribers can be shared with another company, including affiliates.
- The rules now preclude “private rights of action.”

There is a 14-day opening comment period followed by a 14-day reply comment period. A Commission vote is expected in April.

More information on the BOR is on the PUC’s website. The Draft Decision is at: [http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/word\\_pdf/COMMENT\\_DECISION/34459.pdf](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/word_pdf/COMMENT_DECISION/34459.pdf) and Appendix A is at: [http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/word\\_pdf/COMMENT\\_DECISION/34461.pdf](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/word_pdf/COMMENT_DECISION/34461.pdf).

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