

HB 2057 -- MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE FEES FOR VIDEO SERVICE PROVIDERS

SPONSOR: Keathley

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Utilities by a vote of 13 to 1.

This bill modifies the definition of "video service" for provisions of law relating to video service providers to now include streaming content.

This bill is similar to HB 651 (2023).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that satellite and streaming services have never been charged a franchise fee. The franchise fees are for exclusive right to the right-of-way and these services do not have infrastructure in the right-of-way. If local municipalities begin charging franchise fees on these services, consumer bills will most likely increase.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Keathley; Netflix; and the Motion Picture Association.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the current fees do not cover the cost of maintaining the right-of-way. In 2021, the General Assembly passed legislation to create a task force to look into management and taxation of the right-of-way. This task force has yet to meet, which makes the statutory changes premature.

Testifying in person against the bill were City of St. Peters; Municipal League of Metro St. Louis; City of Wildwood; City of Chesterfield; City of St. Charles; Missouri Municipal League; Ryan Moehlman, City of Jefferson ; City of Kansas City; Municipal League of Metro St. Louis; and Steven M. Berezney.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.