

TITLE 4: ECONOMIC RESOURCES
DIVISION 8: UTILITIES

§ 8477. Wireless Service Coverage Maps.

(a) *Establishment of Wireless Service Coverage Maps.* All commercial wireless service providers are required to make available a map of the geographic area for which such provider is licensed to provide commercial wireless service depicting:

- (1) The outdoor service coverage area of such provider, including the outdoor service coverage area of the consumer's local market; and
- (2) Any known outdoor service coverage gaps.

(b) *Specificity of Require Maps.*

(1) Each commercial wireless service provider shall generate at least one map for each area required under subsection (a) using predictive modeling and mapping techniques commonly used by radio frequency engineers in the commercial wireless service industry to depict approximate outdoor service coverage based on signal strength for the applicable commercial wireless service technology and signal strength confidence levels under normal operating conditions on such provider's network, factoring in topographic conditions and subject to variables that impact radio service generally, which shall be disclosed as material limitations in commercial wireless service depiction and availability.

(2) The map generated pursuant to subsection (b)(1) shall be updated at reasonable regular intervals and all updates shall be forwarded to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission.

(3) The map generated pursuant to subsection (b)(1) shall be in sufficient detail to identify:

- (i) General geographic areas where commercial wireless service is not predicted to be regularly available; and
- (ii) Whether or not a consumer is predicted to receive commercial wireless service in the general geographic area in which such consumer's primary residence is located, to the extent prediction of reception in such area is feasible using the formats specified in subsection (b)(1).

(c) *Disclosure to Consumers.* Each commercial wireless service provider shall provide to the consumer the map required under subsection (a):

- (1) Upon the request of such consumer; and
- (2) When such consumer enters into a new wireless service plan.

(d) *Online Access.* Each commercial wireless service provider shall make available the map required under subsection (a) on such provider's Internet website.

(e) *Regulations.* The Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to ensure compliance on the intent and provisions of this section.

Source: PL 18-41 §§ 2-6 (Mar. 21, 2014).

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Commission Comment: The Commission consolidated five sections of the original statute into one section pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(a). The Commission substituted section numbers pursuant to 1 CMC § 3806(d). PL 18-41 (Mar. 21, 2014) contained, in addition to savings and severability clauses, the following Findings and Purpose section:

Section 1. Findings and Purpose. The Legislature finds that there are an increasing number of subscribers to wireless service in the CNMI. Wireless service has become a replacement for traditional telephone service for many residents. With the increasing use and dependency by residential and business consumers, such consumers depend on the wireless provider's promise of coverage in a particular area. A growing number of consumer complaints indicate that some wireless service providers do not clearly or adequately disclose in plain language the services that wireless service companies provide. In some instances, wireless service providers do not make service maps with specific coverage data readily available to consumers. As a result, many consumers learn that the wireless service for which they have subscribed does not meet their needs after they have signed a 2-year contract and have begun using their wireless device. Therefore, it is the purpose of this legislation to provide protection and clarity to consumers prior to and/or after subscribing to a wireless service plan by requiring wireless service providers to make available service coverage maps. Such maps will ensure that consumers are aware of what service and coverage areas are available prior to entering into an agreement with a provider.