HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Utility Uses of Rail Right-of-Way

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Expands the authority of the department of public service over rules governing, and rates charged by railroads for, use of railroad right-of-way by utilities for lines crossing or paralleling railroad right-of-way. Under present law this authority applies to electric wires and natural gas pipelines. Under this change it would also apply to telephone, telegraph, telecommunications, cable, and fiber optic providers and facilities.

"Paralleling" would be defined to mean adjacent to a rail line for up to 2,640 feet, or another distance mutually agreed to, before ending or crossing or exiting the rail right-of-way.

Directs the commissioner of commerce to work with interested parties to develop recommendations on issues relating to use of public and private right-of-way for utility facilities. Requires a report to legislative committees by November 15, 2001.