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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554**

9 FEB 1993

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*mm Docket 92-264*

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8310-MEA  
CN9300339

**RECEIVED**

FEB 11 1993

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Honorable Tim Holden  
House of Representatives  
1421 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Holden:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of several constituents who complain about rate increases and other matters concerning their cable television service.

The enclosures discuss the regulation of the matters your constituents have described. Current regulatory policies are based on the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, which is still in effect.

I have also enclosed for your constituents' information publications describing pending Commission proceedings under the 1992 Cable Act. Although these provisions are not yet in effect, the Commission is in the process of adopting new regulations for cable television, as mandated by Congress. The Commission will attempt to implement these provisions faithfully, and will consider the conduct of the cable industry during the interim period in deciding what kind of regulation is needed. Your constituents' letters will be placed in the record of this proceeding.

I trust that the foregoing and the enclosures are informative.

Sincerely,

*Roy J. Stewart*

Roy J. Stewart  
Chief, Mass Media Bureau

Enclosures

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# Congressional

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING SYSTEM

02/02/93

LETTER REPORT

CONTROL NO.	DATE RECEIVED	DATE OF CORRESP	DATE DUE	DATE DUE OLA(857)
9300339	02/02/93	01/29/93	02/15/93	

TITLE	MEMBERS NAME	REPLY FOR SIG OF
Congressman	Tim Holden	BC

CONSTITUENT'S NAME	SUBJECT
several	inq. re: rate regulation & 92 Cable Act

REF TO	REF TO	REF TO	REF TO
MMB	ENF	CAI	

DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE
02/02/93	2/2	2-2	

REMARKS:

2 FEB REC'D

*Letter  
to  
H. Lou*

**TIM HOLDEN**  
6TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA  
1421 LONGWORTH BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-5546

BERKS COUNTY SERVICES CENTER  
633 COURT STREET  
READING, PENNSYLVANIA 19601  
(215) 371-9931

303 MERIDIAN BANK BUILDING  
POTTSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA 17901  
(717) 622-4212



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
January 29, 1993

*MMB  
cable-rates  
339*

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
ENVIRONMENT, CREDIT, AND  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE  
DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS AND  
NUTRITION SUBCOMMITTEE  
LIVESTOCK SUBCOMMITTEE  
  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. Steve Kitzman  
Associate Director  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street NW Room 808  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Kitzman:

I am contacting you on the behalf of several of my constituents who have written me regarding the increases in their cable rates.

Enclosed are the letters of three of my constituents who are displeased by the increases in their cable rates. I would appreciate if you would note their comments and please monitor the situation with the Service Electric Cable Company in Birdsboro, PA.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

*Tim Holden*

TIM HOLDEN  
Member of Congress

TH/bha

Enclosure

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**TIM HOLDEN**  
6TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA

1421 LONGWORTH BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-5546

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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
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DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS AND  
NUTRITION SUBCOMMITTEE  
LIVESTOCK SUBCOMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

FAX TRANSMITTAL SHEET

---

TO: Lou

FROM: Bruce Andrews

= OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS ONE:

IF PROBLEM, CALL: (202) 225-5546

COMMENTS:

632-7092

RETURN FAX=: (202) 226-0996

December 10, 1992

Joseph J. Cala  
28 Hessian Pines  
Shillington, PA 19607

Mr. George Kowatch  
General Manager  
Service Electric Cable TV, Inc.  
RD #3  
Birdsboro, PA 19508

Dear Mr. Kowatch:

I have never written a letter as a consumer to a company regarding their service, whether good or bad, but I have had enough of your inferior service. My complaints are listed below.

1. For the third time in 1992, you changed your channel numbers. I received a letter from you stating that FCC regulations has forced you to do this, but I do not know of any other cable company that switched their channels three times this year. To me, this is just poor planning on our part. I believe a more detailed explanation is in order.
2. Twice in 1992, one of your service people has to come to my house to investigate the quality of my reception. I am not alone; a number of houses in our neighborhood have the same problem. On the higher channels (above 37), the reception is fuzzy and unclear. Two times this year you have moved the programming that I like to watch, to a higher number on your channel scale (meaning the numbers from 11 to 15 are not in use anymore, and they have been moved to the 30's and 40's) and this is where my reception has always been poor. You have done nothing to fix this situation during your two visits.
3. I am on my second selector box for my premium channel, and I cannot sequence through the stations. Nor can I program stations that I would like to see. I called for seven consecutive working days, a minimum of 15 times a day in order to get service and all I get is a busy signal. I refuse to believe that you are that busy with people subscribing to your service! Can't you get another operator or another line for consumers to call in and request help? I had to call on a Saturday, get the answering service, leave my phone number, and hope that someone will call me back. Someone did, but now your line is busy again.

Service Electric Cable TV, Inc.  
December 10, 1992  
Page Two

4. I am totally outraged by your upcoming price increase. Your \$2.50 price increase that you blame on FCC regulations, is total nonsense. Cable prices are going up only because you want to "beat" the upcoming price regulations passed by the federal government. The only reason you raised prices is because you have a monopoly. What your industry needs is some healthy competition like the rest of us in business have to live with every day. For your information, competition makes you a better company because you have to compete in order to survive. All you presently do is sit back and gouge your customers that you are "locked into" because of your monopoly and never worry about improving service and/or customer service. I pay my bills on time, in fact, I pay in advance every year for your service. I do not like being treated this way.

I am not alone in my feelings on this subject. I am organizing a number of my neighbors who have your service and am requesting them to withhold payment on their future bills until we get a just resolution to this problem. I am looking forward to hearing from you. My home phone number is (215) 775-2247 and my work number is (215) 376-7102, extension 216.

Sincerely,



Joseph J. Cala

cable

33 Whispering Pines Lane  
Birdsboro, PA 19508  
December 23, 1992

The Honorable Tim Holden  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Holden:

I dislike complaining to you in your first week of office but feel I should bring this to your attention as many of your constituents are effected. Several months ago Congress passed a bill to regulate cable T.V. As you remember there were many paid advertisements at that by advocates for and against the bill. The bill passed and was supposed to protect the consumer.

Yesterday I opened my mail and found a bill from my cable company, Service Electric Cable TV, PO Box 25025, Lehigh Valley, PA 18002-5025. The cost for my "basic cable" per month went up from \$18.50 to \$20.50, an increase of 11%.

I will receive a pay raise this year of less than 4%, inflation is less than 4%, so why does my cable television bill nearly triple?

While I realize you had nothing to do with the passage of this law, I believe the cable company is ripping off the consumer. They included a flier with the bill which is supposed to explain the increase, blamed in part on the new law.

The local cable company is a monopoly as I understand they are in most places. Thus I cannot change service if I want to.

Either Congress passed a law harmful to the consumer, or the cable company is taking advantage of the confusion about the law. Either way I believe it should be looked into.

Best wishes for a great first term.

Sincerely,



Lee Boyle

1/11/93

Dear Sir,

What good does the Cable Television Act of 1992 do for the people of our area? Enclosed is an item from a local paper showing the latest increase in basic cable rates. The circled sentence in the second column is wrong. In 1988 I paid \$

1988	..	11.50
------	----	-------

1989	..	12.95
------	----	-------

1990	..	14.99
------	----	-------

1991	..	16.50
------	----	-------

1992	..	18.50
------	----	-------

1993	..	20.50
------	----	-------

I have my payment books to prove these amounts. They don't increase the pay channels at this rate. Live on fixed incomes soon won't be able to afford it.

Respectfully yours,  
 Mrs Edith Kaska  
 235 Lafayette St.  
 Yonkers, Pa.  
 18252

## Tamaqua Borough Council

# Cable TV rate to increase \$2 . . . maybe more later

By KEVIN STEIGERWALT

Financially speaking, the Tamaqua Borough Council had some good news and some bad news for residents last week.

Taxes will not increase next year, but Tamaqua residents can expect to pay at least \$2 per month more for their basic cable service, according to borough council.

Beginning in January, the monthly cable bills for Service Electric Cable Television customers will increase from \$18.50 to \$20.50 and that fee may be raised even more later next year.

In a letter, the cable company informed the borough of the rate hike, and attributed the increase to recent legislation passed by the U.S. Congress — the Cable Television Act of 1992.

According to the letter, which was read at the Dec. 15 council meeting, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is currently adapting to the new law and that

could result in rate increases or decreases later. For now, premium channels like HBO and Prism will not cost more.

Service Electric also plans to rearrange its channel positions and offer special packages to customers who want fewer channels, according to the letter.

"We certainly don't like to see cable rates increase," said Mayor Jerome P. Knowles. "We've complained in the past, but it doesn't seem to do much good."

The last rate increase by Service Electric was in 1989.

On a brighter note, borough council gave final approval to a \$3.9 million budget for 1993, which holds the line on taxes while granting police a small wage hike.

Next year's budget, which was tentatively approved by council on Tuesday, Dec. 1, maintains taxes at 25 mills. The spending plan allocates 22 mills for general purposes and three mills for street lighting.

One mill is a \$1 tax for every \$1,000 of assessed property. Therefore, at one mill, a property owner with \$20,000 worth of property would pay \$20 in real estate taxes.

Acting council President James Wasson emphasized that the new budget does not contain any tax or fee hikes while maintaining all current borough services.

The 1993-94 police contract, which was approved by council at the Dec. 1 meeting, calls for a four percent wage hike next year and a five percent hike in 1994. Police were also awarded additional allowances for prescriptions and

eyeglasses, Wasson said.

### Violations

In other business, council members were told that they may be violating some dog laws by not properly maintaining the borough's animal holding pens. Diane Reppy, manager of the Tamaqua SPCA, said the pens for stray dogs at the Tamaqua sewerage plant do not meet state requirements.

Stray animals are held in pens at the sewerage plant and then turned over to Schuylkill County authorities.

Reppy, who visited the holding pen area, named the apparent violations and quoted laws from the Department of Agriculture's Cruelty to Animals law.

Noting the violations, Reppy said dogs must have access to water at all times and their cages must be locked. "It is a crime not to do these things," she said.