

Reply to comments of the Manufactured Housing Institute of 2/6/2008

The MHI Communities Council opposes prohibiting exclusive contracts between MDUs and cable operators, DBSs and PCOs. I do not agree with their view point.

In their comments the MHI expresses that "owners use their high number of occupants as an incentive in order to persuade DBS and PCO companies to improve their customer service while lowering prices." Unfortunately not all owners in MDUs with high occupancy can persuade their providers to improve service BECAUSE the exclusive and long term contract REMOVES all incentives for the providers. This is especially true when the exclusivity agreement was set up by the original developer (WITH NO RESIDENT INPUT) with a provider actually controlled by said developer. That is the situation that faces Live Oak Preserve residents in Tampa,FL and why we initiated 07-51 against Century Communications. And we are somewhat lucky. Our contract ONLY runs 15 years. Other posted comments have contracts as long as 75 years!!!

The MHI further states that "DBS and PCO companies often offer an extremely high level of service at a discounted price in order to entice these communities to sign onto these exclusive contracts and agreements". The key word in their statement is OFTEN. What about all of the other times when residents have no say in the agreements because they are made by a developer-controlled HOA and the provided services are far from a high level of service????? What recourse do these residents have?????

If these companies can provide these high level of service and lower prices then they should be able to compete in a free market system. If their deals are THAT great, they should be willing to sign non-mandatory bulk-billing agreements with manufactured home communities and any MDUs and trust that their reputation will ensure that most residents subscribe to their service. Let competition NOT kick-backs decide what MVPD a customer chooses so they receive the services that best fits their needs and desires.