



Keep Us Connected

Please help our communities stay connected **PROTECT PEG ACCESS in HB 1500**

AT&T (formerly SBC) and some major business groups are telling all who will listen that this legislation will increase competition by allowing phone companies to compete with existing cable and satellite networks.

What they don't say is that HB 1500, as originally written, severely curtails locally produced PEG (Public, Education and Governmental) channels that enable viewers to watch local health, arts and civic programming including city or town council meetings.

Negotiations are currently underway on an amendment to HB 1500 to resolve problems in the original bill, including:

HB 1500: Has **NO** guarantee that video suppliers will carry PEG channels to their subscribers.

HB 1500: Has **NO** provision for establishing PEG channels in jurisdictions that currently have no channels.

HB 1500: Has **NO** provision for increasing PEG capacity above existing levels.

HB 1500: **ALLOWS** AT&T to confiscate PEG channels if any programs are repeated during an 8-hour day. **NO** commercial (Cable or Network) channels are required to abide by this programming constraint.

HB 1500: Has **NO** guarantee that PEG channels will be carried in the same format and with the same signal quality as commercial channels.

HB 1500: Has **NO** timeframe for AT&T to interconnect PEG channels. **TO DATE, No PEG channels have been hooked up yet in the 10 states in which AT&T has gotten statewide franchises.**

HB 1500: Has **NO** requirement that AT&T cover costs PEGs will have to incur to convert to AT&T's Internet protocol format and to transmit programming to AT&T's system.

HB 1500: Has **NO** protections against losing funds from current cable deals should cable operators opt in to the statewide franchise.

HB 1500: **REDUCES** franchise fees due to a change in the franchise fee definition. *This can result in a 20% loss of revenues for cities and PEGs.*

HB 1500: **CAPS** support for PEG at 1% of gross revenues. *PEG centers with current funding beyond this amount will experience funding cuts.*