



**Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division
445 12th Street, SW., Room 5-A847
Washington, DC 20554**

Date:01/27/2012

**JOHN LAWRENCE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
1 COMMERCE BLVD., SUITE 200
WEST GROVE, PA 19390**

Dear Consumer:

Re: Complaint # **12-C00361112-1**

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the attention of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). This letter is in response to your inquiry concerning cable television service.

The Federal Communications Commission has adopted standards designed to improve the quality of customer service rendered by cable television system operators when providing cable television service. The standards address service outages and calls, cable system office hours, installations, telephone availability, as well as general billing and refund policies. While these federal standards set the minimum baseline for customer service, it is up to local franchising authorities to adopt and enforce the standards. The franchise authority is the local municipal, county or state government entity that is authorized to negotiate, award and enforce the terms of a cable television franchise. The local franchising authority, with the consent of the cable television system operator, also may adopt and enforce customer service requirements that are more stringent than the standards adopted by the Commission. The name of the franchising authority may be on your monthly cable bill. If this information is not located on your bill, contact your local city or county government for this information.

The Federal Communications Commission no longer has the authority to act upon consumer complaints regarding cable television rate increases. Local franchise authorities that are certified by the Commission are authorized to oversee the rates charged for basic cable television service and the equipment used to receive basic service unless the cable system is found to be subject to "effective competition," as defined in the Communications Act. Neither the Commission nor the local franchising authority regulates rates for additional services (such the expanded basic or cable programming tiers, pay-per-channel programming, or pay-per-program services).

With respect to programming, the Communications Act, as well as the Federal Communications Commission's implementing rules, provides cable television operators with broad discretion in selecting the programming services they carry and the technology they use to distribute the

services. However, the Communications Act requires all cable systems to carry local television broadcast stations and make them available to all subscribers. The local franchise authority may also require a cable operator to carry public, educational or governmental channels. Other than requiring the placement of broadcast channels and public, education and government access channels on the basic service tier, decisions concerning which services to provide, on which tier to offer these services, and what technology to deploy are within the discretion of the cable television system operator. Cable operators typically make these decisions based on business imperatives, the technical capabilities of the cable system, as well as customer preferences. Prior to dropping or moving any programming or changing the rates, a cable operator must give its subscribers at least 30 days advance notice.

Your local franchising authority may be able to assist you if you have questions or concerns regarding the basic cable television service rate or customer service issues, including billing disputes, office hours, installations, telephone availability, frequent outages and service calls.

If you have any further questions, please contact our Consumer Information Center at 1-888-CALL-FCC/1-888-225-5322 or TTY at 1-888-835-5322/1-888-TELL-FCC. Information can also be accessed via the Internet at www.fcc.gov.

Sincerely,



Sharon Bowers, Division Chief
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Consumer Inquiries & Complaints Division