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August 24, 2012

Hon. Kenneth C. Hill, Chairman
Tennessee Regulatory Authority
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37238

filed electronically in docket office on
0/24/12

Re: *Complaint of Community Television of Knoxville*
Docket No. 12-00082

Dear Chairman Hill:

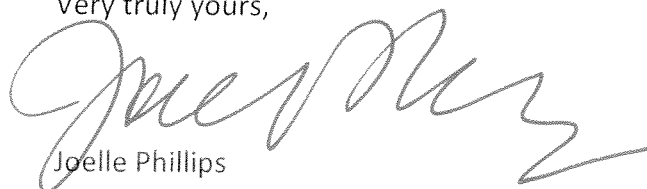
Enclosed please find AT&T Tennessee's Answer in the above-referenced matter.

As explained in the enclosed Answer:

- This is a case about the provisions of the Competitive Cable and Video Services Act, and the Act provides for the TRA to resolve this type of complaint.
- The City and AT&T Tennessee disagree about what the Act requires. The City relies on a general provision of the Act to argue that AT&T must pay the maintenance and repair cost for the City's signal alteration equipment. AT&T relies on the more specific provision regarding signal alteration to argue that the Act does not require AT&T Tennessee to repair this equipment after AT&T Tennessee provided it to the City.
- AT&T Tennessee agrees with the explanation of legislative intent contained in the letter filed by Senator Bill Ketron and Representative Steve McDaniel (Prime Sponsors of the Act). Senator Ketron and Representative McDaniel explain that cities, who own and control this equipment, are in the best position to maintain this equipment, and the Act requires providers like AT&T Tennessee to pay the cities substantial franchise fees, which should be used for this purpose.
- AT&T Tennessee has paid the City approximately \$225,000 in franchise fees since 2009, roughly 22 times the estimated cost of the repair.

Service of this Answer and letter on the City is confirmed in the attached Certificate of Service.

Very truly yours,



Joelle Phillips

1044127

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY
Nashville, Tennessee

In Re: *Complaint of Community Television of Knoxville*

Docket No. 12-00082

ANSWER OF AT&T TENNESSEE

The signal the City of Knoxville uses to deliver its “public, educational, government access channel” (“PEG channel”) content to AT&T Tennessee is not compatible with the IP technology AT&T Tennessee uses to deliver video service to its subscribers. Consequently, for AT&T Tennessee’s customers to view the City’s PEG channels, the City’s PEG channel signal must be altered before AT&T Tennessee transmits PEG programming to its customers. As required by the Competitive Cable and Video Services Act (“the Act”), when AT&T Tennessee first initiated its video service in Knoxville in 2009 it provided the City with a \$10,000 encoder the City uses to make the necessary alterations in the signal it forwards to AT&T Tennessee. Thereafter, AT&T Tennessee also began paying franchise/PEG fees to the City – more than \$225,000 to date -- intended, in part, to cover future maintenance and replacement costs of the City’s PEG equipment.

The encoder has stopped working and is out of warranty. The City’s complaint asks Tennessee Regulatory Authority (“TRA” or “Authority”) to ignore the substantial fees AT&T Tennessee is paying to the City and require AT&T Tennessee to pay – yet again – to repair or replace the equipment. As explained herein, however, AT&T Tennessee’s sole obligation under the Act (relative to this issue) was to provide the City with the initial encoder. After that, the encoder was under the City’s exclusive control, and the City had the obligation to maintain (and if necessary replace) it, using a revenue stream more than adequate for that purpose.

There is no merit to the City’s complaint. The statutory language requiring AT&T Tennessee to “provide” the City with an encoder does not impose any obligation on AT&T Tennessee to also repair,

maintain, or replace the equipment in perpetuity.¹ Both the plain language of the governing statute (which does not contain the words repair, maintain, or replace) and the deliberate legislative negotiations regarding the statute support that conclusion. AT&T Tennessee, therefore, respectfully requests that the Authority deny all relief requested by the City in its Complaint and rule that (a) AT&T Tennessee's only obligation was to provide the PEG equipment at the initiation of AT&T Tennessee's video service, and, (b) consistent with the Act, any subsequent repair or replacement costs are to be borne by the City and funded from the substantial franchise and PEG fees the City collects.

Introduction

Before 2008, Tennessee's locally-controlled franchising process left most Tennessee communities with only one provider of land-line cable or video service. The General Assembly remedied this situation in 2008, when it passed the Act, opening Tennessee's video market to competition from new providers like AT&T Tennessee. As a result, new providers have made significant investment in the State, and Tennessee consumers now enjoy the benefits of a far more robustly-competitive video market that offers more choices and better prices.

The Act was the subject of vigorous debate over two legislative sessions, and passage was eventually accomplished only after Legislators directed opponents and proponents of the Act to spend weeks negotiating under the supervision of legislative sponsors.² The result was a carefully-constructed compromise bill – which balanced the interest of new entrants into the market (like AT&T), incumbent providers (like Comcast and Charter), and local governments (like the City).

¹The Act authorizes the TRA to resolve complaints regarding provision of PEG channels. T.C.A. § 7-59-312.

² News coverage of the legislative battle included this article from February 4, 2008, in Nashville Post, "Naifeh on cable-AT&T battle: 'We will have a bill'," in which then Speaker Jimmy Naifeh described the contentious negotiations over the bill. The Post reported:

"Competition is what can make this particular item work," Naifeh told reporters. He said he doubts that either AT&T or cable companies would like the legislation in the end, which in his view would mean "it's a good bill for Tennesseans." He also said that over the course of the past six weeks, representatives from both sides have been meeting with Legislators to come up with a bill that is "good for all Tennesseans."

On many issues, Legislators sided with local government. There were other issues on which Legislators decided that the needs of consumers or providers outweighed the preference of local government. The TRA's role in resolving this dispute is to effectuate the compromise that Legislators crafted in the language of the law – not to alter the balance of these decisions now, by imposing a repair obligation on providers when Legislators chose not to do so.

The TRA would commit legal error if, in effect, it re-wrote the law that Legislators agreed upon, in order to provide the relief the City seeks. Moreover, the TRA would also be mistaken if it concluded that local government needs protection from a “bad bargain.” In fact, local government fared well in the negotiations that produced the Act. Some of the highest profile issues involved whether new entrants would be required to “build out” to reach a specified number of potential customers (“build out” was required of new entrants), whether incumbents would be required to fulfill obligations to local governments contained in existing local franchises (Incumbents were required to do so), and whether video providers would pay franchise fees directly to local governments (providers were required to do so and were required to pay up to 5% in such fees). In each of these areas, the interest of local government was well-protected.

While Legislators were concerned with the interests of local government, they also decided, on many issues, that local government preferences would not be the right path and declined to include local government-supported proposals. In particular, Legislators were wary of imposing too many PEG-related requirements, which could have increased subscribers' costs for channels that subscribers did not watch in large numbers. Among the rejected PEG proposals were requirements mandating certain picture quality standards (which would not have been compatible with newer technology platforms) and requirements that channels be preserved for PEG even if local governments no longer used the channels or stopped producing new PEG programming, leaving the channels idle.

At the end of the legislative process, legislative sponsors balanced the competing interests in the manner they decided best served Tennessee. The City now asks the TRA to read into the law a provision that does not appear in the language. That would be an error of statutory construction and have the impact of disrupting the careful balance of provisions Legislators believed was best.

I. The Act Establishes Clear And Detailed Requirements Regarding Provision Of PEG.

Local governments were ably represented in the Act's negotiation sessions, and provision of PEG channels was only one among many issues on which local government focused. As described above, it would be wrong to conclude, because some of their preferences on PEG channels were rejected by Legislators, that local government had not successfully negotiated into the law other provisions that were important and valuable – many of higher priority to local government (such as maximizing franchise fees and preserving police powers relating to the deployment of facilities in local rights-of-way), or that the PEG provisions in the Act did not contain requirements that local government sought.

On every aspect of the complex Act, Legislators considered the arguments of the various parties and sought to strike the right balance. Legislators sought to encourage competition for consumers and to bring investment and new technology for Tennessee's economy on the one hand, while preserving appropriate regulation that treated competitors and local government fairly on the other. Legislators knew that too few obligations on new providers could have a negative impact on local government, but too many could discourage new entrants from competing successfully.

With respect to PEG channels, that balance resulted in a detailed list of multiple PEG-related requirements for holders of state-issued franchises, including the following:

- **Number of Channels.** Legislators chose to require holders of state-issued franchises to provide the same number of PEG channels already activated by the incumbent provider and also required incumbents to fulfill PEG channel obligations in existing local franchises – even if they opted for a state-issued franchise.³ On this issue, Legislators compromised between the preference of providers (to reduce the number of existing PEG channels, making room to meet

³ T.C.A. § 7-59-309(d)

consumer demand for more popular channels) and the preference of local governments (to increase the number of channels and keep PEG channels on certain tiers.)

- **Existing PEG Support Fees.** Legislators chose to require new providers to pay a PEG support fee equivalent to any PEG support fee required of the incumbent under the terms of the incumbent's local franchise, to require incumbents to continue paying such fees through the expiration date of local franchises (even if they opt for a state-issued franchise), and to preserve such historic PEG support on an ongoing basis.⁴ On this issue, Legislators compromised between the preference of local governments (who urged that they should be permitted to establish new PEG support payments over and above franchise fee payments), and the position of providers (who argued that franchise fees provided ample resources from which cities could cover all PEG-related costs if they chose to have PEG channels).
- **New PEG-Support Fees.** Legislators chose to allow local government, where no PEG support fee existed under the terms of the incumbent's franchise, to establish a new PEG support fee of up to 1% of gross revenues, provided that the total PEG support fee combined with the local franchise fee may not exceed 5%.⁵ On this point, Legislators compromised between ending existing PEG support payments, as providers urged, and allowing any city to establish a new PEG channel and a new PEG support fee as local government urged.
- **Transmission of PEG Signal to Video Consumers.** Legislators chose to require new providers to bear the ongoing cost of transmitting the signal from the city's PEG origination point to its video consumers after any alterations to the signal that are necessary to make it compatible with the new providers' systems are performed.⁶ (In the case of AT&T's IP-based U-verse TV™ service, this is accomplished by picking up the altered signal from the PEG origination point using a dedicated T-1 transport service, which would ordinarily cost a retail subscriber approximately \$550 per month. Once the altered signal is delivered by that transport service, AT&T uses its network to transmit the signal to its video customers.) On this issue, legislators compromised between the preference of providers (who urged that the costs of delivering the PEG signal from the city's origination point to the provider's network should be borne by cities) and local government (who urged that providers should be required to cover all costs of picking up the PEG signal, regardless of the location of cities' PEG origination points).

⁴ T.C.A. § 7-59-309(j)(1).

⁵ T.C.A. § 7-59-309(j)(2).

⁶ T.C.A. § 7-59-309(f). The City suggests that that the statutory provisions generally addressing signal transmission apply to this case, but the City is mistaken. This case is not about who must transmit the City's PEG signal to AT&T Tennessee's customers – instead, this case is about who, on a going-forward basis, must maintain, repair, or replace the equipment that is necessary to alter that signal to make it compatible with AT&T Tennessee's technology before the signal is transmitted to AT&T Tennessee's customers. It is clear from the structure and language of the statute that these are separate and distinct issues. The statutory provisions generally addressing the transmission of the City's signal are set forth in subsection §7-59-309(f)(1), while the provisions specifically addressing any alterations that are necessary to make the City's signal compatible with AT&T Tennessee's technology before the signal is transmitted are set forth separately in subsection 7-59-309(f)(2). And it is the specific provisions of subsection 7-59-309(f)(2), and not the general provisions of subsection 7-59-309(f)(1), that apply to this case. *Ramsey v. Tenn. Dept of Human Services*, 2011 Tenn. App. LEXIS 6, *10 ("It is a well-settled principle of statutory construction that [s]pecific provisions relating to a particular subject must govern in respect to that subject, as against general provisions in other parts of the law which otherwise might be broad enough to include it").

- **Alteration of Signal.** Legislators chose to require new providers that use different or newer technology than the incumbent to participate in the alteration of a city's PEG signal to make it capable of transmission over newer technology used, including providing the equipment needed to alter the signal.⁷ (In the case of AT&T's IP-based U-verse TV™ service, this is accomplished by providing each local government with an encoder device and other pieces of equipment, which for the City cost AT&T approximately \$17,300 in the aggregate.) On this issue, Legislators compromised between the preference of providers (to require local governments to provide a signal compatible with newer IP technologies and to bear all the costs associated with updating PEG studios to accomplish any alteration required) and the preference of local government (to require providers to bear not only the cost of providing the new equipment needed to upgrade the PEG studio's ability to alter the signal to the newer technology, but also to have an ongoing responsibility to repair, maintain, or replace such equipment if it was damaged once in the control of the City.) ***This is the very issue raised by the City's complaint, and the City is seeking a different outcome than the compromise position decided by Legislators.***
- II. **AT&T Tennessee Complied with the Act by Providing to the City, at AT&T Tennessee's Expense, Equipment Needed to Alter the City's PEG Channel Signal so AT&T Tennessee Could Then Transmit the City's PEG Programming to AT&T Tennessee's Customers.**

On May 19, 2010, AT&T provided and installed, at no cost to the City, equipment necessary to alter the City's PEG programming signal to a format that AT&T Tennessee could then transmit to its video service customers. This equipment included an encoder, router, Ethernet switch and connection patch panel with an aggregate value of \$17,300. The equipment AT&T provided was subject to a 90-day warranty. AT&T also provided the City with the information attached as Exhibit A in October 2009 (prior to providing the equipment), and the information stated that AT&T would not be responsible for maintenance after the 90-day warranty period.

Specifically, the material provided with the equipment stated:

AT&T will provide and configure the conversion equipment based on AT&T technical specifications. AT&T provides a 90-day warranty on the equipment from installation. After the 90-day period, all conversion equipment provided by AT&T will be fully owned by, and the responsibility of, the City, and AT&T assumes no liability for, and makes no warranties, express or implied, with respect to, the equipment after the 90-day warranty expires. After the 90-day period expires, however, a manufacturer's warranty may be applicable to the equipment. The City may contact the manufacturer directly for more information. Further, the City may contact 3rd party vendors for information and a pricing quote on an extended warranty and support.

⁷ T.C.A. § 59-7-309(f)

...

The City may report technical issues to AT&T's Emerging U-verse applications. During the first 90 days after installation, AT&T will troubleshoot and resolve issues within the AT&T U-verse network, the PEG transport circuit(s) and the AT&T-provided PEG conversion equipment. After 90 days, AT&T will troubleshoot the AT&T U-verse network up to the building's minimum point of entry (MPOE) or demarcation and clear any issues with AT&T's network. If the problem is identified to be with the City's encoding hardware or software, the City is responsible for troubleshooting and issue resolution and can contact the hardware manufacturer or a 3rd party vendor for trouble resolution.

On May 29, 2012, AT&T noticed that it was not receiving a PEG signal from the City. After verifying that its T-1 transport service was operating properly, AT&T notified the City of the situation and asked the City to check its signal alteration equipment. AT&T personnel had several discussions with City personnel to attempt to resolve this issue. AT&T first tried to remotely diagnose the problem. When that remote diagnosis was unable to determine the cause, AT&T requested that its vendor, Telamon Corp., contact the City to attempt additional remote diagnostics. AT&T then dispatched a technician (at AT&T's cost) to identify the problem and offer solutions for repair or replacement if necessary. The technician concluded that the encoder was not operating and needed to be replaced. The estimated cost to replace the encoder is \$10,000, including installation.

III. **The Plain Language of the Controlling Statute Makes the City, not AT&T Tennessee, Responsible for the Maintenance, Repair, and Replacement of the Signal Alteration Equipment AT&T Tennessee Provided the City.**

Tennessee courts have explained that in construing a statute under its jurisdiction, the Authority must look first to the language of the statute itself. When that language is plain and unambiguous, as here, the Authority cannot add language that is not in the statute or adopt an interpretation that expands the statute's meaning.⁸ It is clear from the plain language of the applicable section⁹ of the Act

⁸ The guiding principle of statutory construction is to give effect to legislative intent without unduly restricting or expanding the statute's coverage beyond its intended scope. *Lyons v. Rasar*, 872 S.W.2d 895, 897 (Tenn. 1994). Such legislative intent is generally gleaned from the plain language of the statute without any forced or subtle construction that would extend or limit its meaning. *Id.*; *Wilson v. Johnson County*, 879 S.W.2d 807, 809 (Tenn. 1994).

that AT&T Tennessee is not required to maintain, repair, or replace the equipment as the City mistakenly claims in its Complaint.

Subsection 7-59-309(f) of the Act sets out the responsibilities of the City and AT&T Tennessee with regard to the operation, content, and transmission of PEG channels. It begins with subitem (1), which plainly states that “[t]he operation and content of any PEG channel provided pursuant to this section shall be the responsibility of the [City] ... and [AT&T Tennessee] bears **only** the responsibility for the **transmission** of the channel.”¹⁰ Clearly, the statutory rule is that the City is responsible for all costs of delivering a useable PEG channel signal to AT&T Tennessee, and AT&T Tennessee is responsible **only** for the costs of transmitting that usable signal to its customers.

Subitem (2) then provides a specific exception to this general rule, requiring a provider like AT&T Tennessee, in certain circumstances, to assume limited responsibilities beyond just transmitting the PEG channel.¹¹ This exception applies in this case because the City sends AT&T Tennessee a PEG signal that cannot be sent along to AT&T Tennessee’s customers without alteration.¹² Under these circumstances, AT&T Tennessee can choose between two statutory options. One option is for AT&T Tennessee itself to alter the signal to make it compatible with the technology or protocol AT&T Tennessee uses to deliver its video services.¹³ Alternatively, AT&T Tennessee can “provide” the City “the equipment needed to accomplish such alteration.”¹⁴ AT&T Tennessee chose this second option and provided the City the equipment needed to accomplish such alteration.

⁹ As noted above, the City’s complaint mistakenly focuses on the more general statutory provisions addressing the **transmission** of the City’s signal. This case is governed by the more specific statutory provisions addressing any **alterations** that are necessary to make the City’s signal compatible with AT&T Tennessee’s technology before the signal is transmitted.

¹⁰ T.C.A. §7-59-309(f)(emphasis added).

¹¹ Like all exceptions to general statutory rules, this exception must be construed as narrowly as possible. *Little v. Eastgate of Jackson, LLC*, 2007 Tenn App. LEXIS 242, *6-7 (noting need to narrowly construe exception to general at-will employment doctrine to avoid exception swallowing rule.); *McGowan v. Miles*, 72 SW 2d 553, 559 (Tenn. 1934)(noting that exception to general rules are to be narrowly construed).

¹² See §7-59-309(f)(2).

¹³ See §7-59-309(f)(2)(A).

¹⁴ See §7-59-309(f)(2)(B).

The City argues that the more general provision requiring “transmission” of the PEG signal requires AT&T Tennessee to not only give the City the signal alteration equipment free of charge (which AT&T Tennessee did), but also to repair, maintain, and/or replace this equipment regardless of when or why it ceases to function. But the specific language in the statute addressing the signal alteration does not say that AT&T must “repair,” “maintain,” or “replace” the signal alteration equipment¹⁵ – it plainly says that AT&T Tennessee is only required to “provide” the equipment. That alone makes clear that the Authority must reject the City’s proposed interpretation of the Act.

In addition to the plain language of the statute, the interplay between §7-59-309(f)(2)(A) and §7-59-309(f)(2)(B) makes clear that the City’s proposed interpretation is wrong. As explained above, under the circumstances of this case, the Act gives AT&T Tennessee the option to either: (A) alter the City’s PEG signal to make it compatible with the technology or protocol it uses to transmit its video services; or (B) “provide” the City “the equipment needed to accomplish such alteration.”¹⁶ Option A – altering the City’s PEG signal – would involve AT&T using its own network to perform the alteration and therefore would require AT&T Tennessee to perform the same repairs, maintenance, and/or replacements of its own equipment that would ordinarily be required to keep it operating. AT&T Tennessee, however, chose Option B – to “provide” the City “the equipment needed to accomplish such alteration.” Under AT&T Tennessee’s correct interpretation of the statute, Option B is substantively different than Option A because Option B does not require AT&T Tennessee to repair, maintain, and/or replace the equipment that accomplishes the alterations. In sharp contrast, under the City’s erroneous interpretation of the statute, Option A and Option B are substantively identical – both would require AT&T Tennessee to repair, maintain, and/or replace the equipment that accomplishes the alterations.

¹⁵ It would have been easy enough for the General Assembly to have included the words “maintain,” “repair,” or “replace,” in the statute, and it is no mistake that they do not appear in the statute. To the contrary, the General Assembly clearly intended that AT&T Tennessee’s obligation is merely to “provide” the equipment, and not to maintain, repair, or replace the equipment. See Letter from Senator Bill Ketron and Representative Steve McDaniel, filed in this docket on August 10, 2012.

¹⁶ See T.C.A. §7-59-309(f)(2).

But Tennessee law clearly instructs the Authority to choose an interpretation of a statute that renders meaning to each of its provisions (as AT&T Tennessee’s interpretation does) over an interpretation that (like the City’s) renders some of the statute’s provisions meaningless or superfluous.¹⁷

Finally, and most importantly, the Act allows the City to collect from AT&T Tennessee a hefty franchise fee of 5% of its video services revenue in the City,¹⁸ and the City is free to use these fees to maintain, repair, or replace the equipment AT&T Tennessee provided. The Act also allows the City to impose a “state-authorized PEG access support payments” of up to 1% of such revenues, and these PEG access support payments “may not be used for other purposes.”¹⁹ The fact that the General Assembly provided revenue for the City to use for the sole purpose of “PEG access support” further refutes the City’s argument that it is not responsible for these costs.

A. The City’s Interpretation Imposes Unreasonable Burdens on New Entrants into the Video Market at Odds with the Legislature’s Careful Balancing of Interests.

During negotiation of the Act, Legislators considered – and accepted or rejected – numerous proposals. Legislators balanced competing interests, and no stakeholder walked away with everything it hoped. The resulting final legislation, co-sponsored by 62 House members and 7 senators, was a 50-page public chapter addressing every aspect of the complex debate.

On the issue of PEG, Legislators could have chosen a much more restrictive approach, eliminating or severely limiting government mandates for providers to fund these channels. New providers argued that the need for government-mandated, yet un-funded, programming was now far less compelling because cities (like Knoxville) are now able to provide up-to-the-minute information to the public using internet websites. Similarly, the programming often featured on “community access” channels can also be obtained through YouTube and other internet sites. Given this dramatic shift in

¹⁷ *State v. Turner*, 913 SW2d 158, 162 (Tenn. 1995)(noting that courts should construe statutes to avoid rendering provisions redundant or meaningless).

¹⁸ T.C.A. § 7-59-306.

¹⁹ T.C.A. §7-59-309(J)(1), (4).

circumstances, Legislators could have concluded that cable and video subscribers should not be forced to subsidize local programming that could be seen using less expensive web-based platforms.

Those arguments were balanced against arguments from local government who wanted new competitors' subscribers to view the same PEG programming that landline incumbents were transmitting – even if subscribers did not wish to pay for these channels.

In the final compromise, cities obtained substantial financial support from new providers. In addition to the requirement to pay to provide the equipment needed to alter PEG signals to newer technological platforms, providers were also required to fund the transmission of PEG signals, including the transport from the PEG origination point to the provider's network.

Legislators, however, stopped short of requiring new providers to shoulder the cost of maintenance or repair of signal alteration equipment outside their control. By failing to include any reference to repair or maintenance of signal alteration equipment, Legislators made clear that no such obligation was included among the many other PEG-related financial burdens imposed on providers.

B. The Decision to Place Maintenance Responsibilities on Cities Was Reasonable, and the City Should Have Planned for the Potential of Repair Costs.

Legislators did not leave cities without resources to repair and maintain this equipment. New providers were required to pay franchise fees to cities, and the cities are free to invest such fees in PEG studio maintenance.²⁰

Tennessee courts routinely stress the importance of interpreting statutes in a manner that does not produce an absurd result.²¹ Yet, the City's urged interpretation would absurdly require a new entrant, who has just provided the city with a working piece of PEG equipment, to provide another to replace it if the City simply tossed the equipment out the window, or otherwise failed to maintain the

²⁰ In fact, AT&T Tennessee has paid the City \$225,076.73 in video franchise fees since 4th Quarter, 2009. The 5% franchise fee required under the Act is the maximum permitted under Federal Law. 47 USC 542(b).

²¹ See, for example, *Wachovia Bank v. Johnson*, 26 S.W.3d 621, 627 (Tenn. App. 2000) ("Courts must presume that the legislature did not intend an absurdity and adopt, if possible, a reasonable construction which provides for a harmonious operation of the law.")

equipment properly. While there is no indication that the City has damaged this equipment, it is clear that the City is in a far better position than AT&T to maintain and repair equipment kept in the City's PEG studio under the City's control. This logic is consistent with the reasonable decision of Legislators to require new entrants to provide – but not to repair or maintain – this equipment.

The legislative decision to require new entrants to provide – but not to repair or maintain – PEG equipment is especially logical when read in combination with the Act's franchise fee requirements. Legislators understood that, when a new provider first enters a city, the city has not yet received any franchise fees, which the city could use to pay for equipment needed to alter the PEG signal. Legislators therefore saw value in requiring the new provider to “front” the costs of that equipment. Legislators also understood, however, that later – if the equipment needed repairs – the situation would be different. By that time, the new provider would have paid (and would continue to pay) the City a steady stream of franchise fees. Legislators decided that, at that point, the cost of repairs or maintenance of PEG equipment owned and controlled by the city could be easily covered using that stream of franchise fees. As noted above, in this case, by the time this repair was needed, AT&T Tennessee had already paid franchise fees to the City of more than twenty-two times the cost of replacing the broken PEG equipment.

Finally, the City was well aware of the potential that it would incur costs in maintaining its PEG station and equipment, including equipment used to alter signal for new providers. AT&T has been clear about its understanding of the responsibilities relating to this equipment. As noted above, the fact that the City would own and bear responsibility for the equipment was noted in the materials (attached as Exhibit A), which AT&T provided to the City at the time of installation.

Conclusion

The applicable language of the statute addressing signal alteration equipment is clear, and it logically places the repair and maintenance responsibilities with the entity that controls, owns and

posses the equipment. Legislators placed the majority of PEG-related responsibilities on providers by using clear and detailed statutory language. If the intent had been to add a repair and maintenance obligation to the long list of PEG-related obligations, then the language of the statute would say so.

Legislators were not insensitive to the financial needs of cities, including the potential costs associated with maintenance and repair of new PEG equipment. In fact, the franchise fees paid to the City provide ample resources for that maintenance and repair.

Looking to general statutory language on transmission to impose maintenance and repair costs for signal alteration equipment would be inconsistent with the Legislature's intent and the language used in the statute to address signal alteration specifically. For all the reasons set forth above, AT&T respectfully urges the TRA to reject the City's interpretation of the Act and enter an order finding that AT&T is not responsible for the cost of maintenance and repair of the PEG equipment that it provided to the City.

Respectfully submitted,

AT&T TENNESSEE

By: 

Joelle Phillips
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Nashville, Tennessee 37201-3300
615 214-6311
jp3881@att.com

Exhibit A

Important information Regarding AT&T's PEG Solution

Thank you for your interest in AT&T U-verse TV and public, educational and government programming, or "PEG." This sheet contains some important information about AT&T's PEG solution and describes the actions that must be undertaken by AT&T and the City before PEG programming can be carried over AT&T's U-verse TV service.

AT&T's PEG solution

AT&T uses Internet Protocol (IP) technology to stream a city's PEG channels through the AT&T U-verse TV service to U-verse TV subscribers in the designated market area (DMA).

Conversion of PEG Programming Signal to IP Format

In order to provide PEG programming in the appropriate format for distribution to AT&T U-verse TV subscribers, the PEG programming signal must be converted to a digitally encoded video stream(s) using Windows Media 9, encoded at a rate of 1.25 Mbps per stream. AT&T shall, at its own expense, provide, configure, and install the necessary equipment required to convert the City's PEG programming signal to the required format. AT&T will provide and configure the conversion equipment based on AT&T technical specifications. AT&T provides a 90-day warranty on the equipment from installation. After the 90-day period, all conversion equipment provided by AT&T will be fully owned by, and the responsibility of, the City, and AT&T assumes no liability for, and makes no warranties, express or implied, with respect to, the equipment after the 90-day warranty expires. After the 90-day period expires, however, a manufacturer's warranty may be applicable to equipment. The City may contact the manufacturer directly for more information. Further, the City may contact 3rd party vendors for information and a pricing quote on an extended warranty and support.

Transmission of PEG Programming Signal to AT&T's network

AT&T will provide, at its own expense, the required transmission capacity to transport the PEG streams from the building's minimum point of entry (MPOE) or demarcation to AT&T's network. The City is solely responsible for all inside wiring, intra network cable (INC), conduits, or cable raceways as such may be required to connect or provide connectivity from the MPOE to the PEG conversion equipment.

Preparation of PEG Programming by City

The City shall deliver its PEG programming signal (audio and video) to the PEG conversion equipment in a standard format, using standard connectors, to be specified by AT&T. Depending on how the city's PEG system is configured, the city may need to perform work or install equipment that permits AT&T suitable access to the signal and the ability to install the equipment. The type of work cities must perform may include house cabling, premises wiring and demarcation or MPOE extensions, video and audio splitters and amplifiers to deliver the signal at the proper levels; equipment/rack space; conduit; AC/DC power; modifications to HVAC systems or other building-related requirements that may be required to install the conversion equipment. AT&T will work with the city to recommend equipment placement locations and cabling requirements. More information is available on Page 3.

Delivery of PEG Programming to U-verse TV Subscribers

AT&T will deliver the PEG programming to all U-verse TV subscribers within the same designated marketing area (DMA). U-verse subscribers shall locate such programming at Channel 99 using the U-verse PEG menu screens

Internet addresses for PEG programming ("URLs/IP Addresses")

Each PEG channel transmitted by the city to AT&T must have a unique and dedicated Internet URL/IP address. The city will need to work with AT&T to identify and finalize the dedicated URL/IP address for each of its PEG channels. AT&T will provide the city an electronic capability and format ("Muni Administrative Software Tool") to communicate the dedicated URL/IP address information to AT&T.

Timely Completion of PEG Installation

AT&T will meet with the city to review PEG requirements and will provide a list of any required items for the site-specific installation. AT&T and the city will work cooperatively and on a timely basis to ensure that work is completed to enable the placement of PEG equipment within specified timelines.

Maintenance and Support

The City may report technical issues to AT&T's Emerging U-verse Applications (EUA). During the first 90 days after installation, AT&T will troubleshoot and resolve issues within the AT&T U-verse network, the PEG transport circuit(s) and the AT&T-provided PEG conversion equipment. After 90 days, AT&T will troubleshoot the AT&T U-verse network up to the building's minimum point of entry (MPOE) or demarcation and clear any issues within AT&T's network. If the problem is identified to be with the City's encoding hardware or software, the City is responsible for troubleshooting and issue resolution and can contact the hardware manufacturer or a 3rd party vendor for trouble resolution.

PEG Programming Content

AT&T shall not exert direct or indirect programming control or assert ownership over the city's PEG programming. All PEG content provided to AT&T by the city shall remain the responsibility of the city. The city shall ensure that it has the appropriate rights to allow transmission of all content by AT&T to subscribers in the DMA. AT&T shall have no editorial control over the city's PEG programming.

PEG Equipment Requirements

The following are general requirements for the PEG conversion and associated equipment. Actual requirements will be finalized through discussion following the site visits.

1. The equipment may be placed in existing relay racks if such space is available in a secure location (e.g., locked room or similar environment.) Otherwise, a small amount of floor space may be required in order to install the equipment in a locked cabinet.
2. Typically, the electrical power requirement is a 15 amp dedicated 120VAC circuit and standard grounded outlet (within 6 (six) feet of the equipment).
3. For each channel of programming, the equipment requires one video and one audio hand off (isolated) using one of the options described below. The hand offs must be isolated (e.g., via a distribution amplifier.)
 - o Video Connection options:
 - National Television Standard Committee (NTSC):
 - SDI (BNC-Male connector on hand off cable from source) – SMPTE 259M or
 - Composite (via 1 locking BNC-Male connector on hand off cable from source) or
 - Component (via 3 locking BNC-Male connector on hand off cable from source) or
 - S-video (via 2 locking BNC-Male connector on hand off cable from source)
 - o Audio connection options:
 - Embedded audio over SDI (via 1 locking BNC-Male connector on hand off cable from source) or
 - 2 independent balanced Audio feeds (via 2 locking XLR connectors—Male connector on hand off cable from source)

Typically, 4 feet of slack cabling is required for both audio and video connections

Note: *Depending on the distance from the City A/V source to the location of the conversion equipment.*

4. At the equipment site, a cable path is needed (e.g., to run CAT 5 wiring) from the equipment to the telco-facility MPOE (minimum point of entry) where the AT&T transmission facilities will be terminated.
5. Depending on the actual site location, other miscellaneous requirements may need to be discussed. For example, reinforcement for mounting of equipment services, mounting of relay racks or cabinets based upon building code to support all Local, State, and Federal building standards, as applicable.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on August 24, 2012, a copy of the foregoing document was served on the following, via the method indicated:

- ☐ Hand
- ☐ Mail
- ☐ Facsimile
- ☐ Overnight
- ☒ Electronic

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RMills', is written over a horizontal line.