

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 28, 2005 LB 645

good. I think someone else characterized this as "iffy" technology. There was considerable testimony at the hearing dealing with interference caused by BPL to radio signals, and I believe, without dragging out too many notes, it was accepted that there were problems with, particularly from two megahertz, which would be 2,000 up to I think about 8,000, 2 megs to 8 megs interference up to 1,500 feet. They're working on that. I'm not condemning BPL because of this, because it's something that could happen, that they could rectify this. And I also need to state that the BPL, the signal, was carried on the outside of the power line. It's not like a fiber line within the power line. This is actually carried on the outside of the power line. And part of the cost involved with transmitting it long-distance is it has to be bypassed around transformer connections and so on, as I understand it. I'm not an expert at this, but I believe from my memory that was part of the problem was moving the signal around the transformers on these lines that did serve existing customers. Some of the trials are working. It sounds like some of them failed. We've heard both sides of that. It's a little bit hard to believe, as Senator Brashear pointed out. It's just going to give us some breathing room to study the issue and technology as it evolves. Maybe within the next year and a half, it will become more clear what it is we want to do with this. But to expose the ratepayers to power companies implementing some of this and then having to pay for it when it is a technology that's in development stages, everyone agrees with that; it'd probably not be good policy. So we're putting a moratorium on this. Go ahead and put the task force in place. It's regrettable that the task force has to report by, I believe it's December 1, 2006. I think most of us who are working on this particular issue are term-limited out, so we're going to have to depend on some of the senators who are left after this group of 20 of us moves on in the 2007 session. But I have a lot of confidence and faith in you, and you'll obviously get the job done. Want to also address the issue of Universal Service Fund a bit. That is an issue that we work with a lot in the Telecommunications Committee, Transportation. That was, we are looking at the entire Universal Service Fund set-up and how it's disbursed and so on, and some additional accountability that has been used in the past for eligible local carriers, and so on, to get to the last line and provide