

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS, UTILITIES, AND ENERGY

BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO. H.3557

TITLE: An Act relative to reporting on double poles

SPONSOR: Representative Jeffrey N. Roy

COMMITTEE: Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy

HEARING DATE: June 4, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: *New bill*

CURRENT LAW:

Chapter 164, Section 34B pertains to the removal or installation of utility poles by distribution companies or telephone companies. It requires companies switching out an existing utility pole with a new replacement to complete the transfer of wires, all repairs, and the removal of the existing pole from the site within 90 days from the date of installation of the new pole. There exists an exception for approved commercial or industrial construction projects lasting more than one year. Under such circumstances, the company is required to remove the existing pole within six months from the date of installation of the new pole.

Chapter 218 of the Acts of 2016 directed telephone companies and electric distribution companies to submit annual reports to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy and the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government for calendar years 2016 through 2018. The reports were required to include the numbers and statuses of double pole attachments, transfers, unlicensed commercial and municipal attachments, as well as a list of communities and municipal electric companies that are participating in the statewide notification system.

SUMMARY:

Beginning April 1, 2027, this legislation requires the telephone and electric distribution companies operating in the Commonwealth to jointly submit an annual report to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy and the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.

The information shared in these annual reports must cover the calendar year through December 31 and include detailed information regarding the numbers and statuses of double pole attachments, transfers, unlicensed commercial and municipal attachments, and timelines and cost estimates for the removal of existing double poles (as of December 31, 2026). Each company must also include in its annual report a list of communities and municipal electric companies that are participating in the statewide notification system.

This legislation also requires the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and the Department of Telecommunications (DTC) to jointly issue a report detailing the status of double poles progress for calendar year 2019 through calendar year 2024, which is the period of time when double poles reports were not submitted to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy and the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.