**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 58‑9‑255 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION REQUIRE COUNTYWIDE TOLL‑FREE CALLING TO BE PROVIDED BY ALL TELEPHONE UTILITIES OPERATING WITHIN A COUNTY BY JULY 1, 2009, AND TO PROVIDE FOR RELATED MATTERS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 3, Chapter 9, title 58 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 58‑9‑255. (A) Unless otherwise prohibited by law, the commission shall require countywide toll‑free calling to be provided by all telephone utilities operating within a county by July 1, 2009. If two or more telephone utilities operate in the same county, each telephone utility shall provide countywide toll‑free calling to and from telephones within the area served by the other telephone utility or telephone utilities in the county.

(B) The commission shall require telephone utilities to enter into negotiations to provide for countywide toll‑free calling throughout their service areas. If the telephone utilities are unable to reach an agreement within a time frame consistent with the requirements of this section, the commission shall impose its own countywide toll‑free calling plan.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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