



Status of Competition for Video Services in Michigan

In compliance with Public Act 480 of 2006

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Executive Summary

This annual report, submitted by the Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) in accordance with Section 12(2) of the Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act (2006 PA 480, or the Act), describes the status of competition for video/cable services in Michigan. There are currently 28 video and cable television providers offering service to Michigan customers and they are continuing to report more competition in their franchise areas since the Act took effect. This report provides information regarding the responsibilities and activities of the Commission, the results from the 2025 Commission survey to gather information from franchise entities and video/cable providers, as well as recommendations to the Legislature. It is important to note that the Act does not provide jurisdiction over satellite television providers and as such, this report does not include information regarding satellite providers or their customers.

The Commission continues to educate and inform customers of the dispute resolution process and will continue to oversee complaints regarding video/cable services in Michigan. The Commission will continue to monitor the status of video/cable services competition in Michigan, which includes receiving and analyzing information from both franchise entities and video/cable service providers throughout the state. The Commission will also continue to assist individual customers, franchise entities, and providers with their questions and/or complaints, as well as inform the Governor and Legislature of any future developments and make the appropriate recommendations for needed legislation.

Introduction

On January 1, 2007, the Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act (hereinafter referred to as “2006 PA 480” or the “Act”) became effective. Section 12(2) of the Act states:

“The commission shall file a report with the governor and legislature by February 1 of each year that shall include information on the status of competition for video services in this state and recommendations for any needed legislation. A video service provider shall submit to the commission any information requested by the commission necessary for the preparation of the annual report required under this subsection. The obligation of a video service provider under this subsection is limited to the submission of information generated or gathered in the normal course of business.”

This Act directs the Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) to provide information regarding the status of competition for video/cable services in Michigan, as well as any recommendations for needed legislation to the Governor and Legislature by February 1 of each year. For the eighteenth year, the Commission has collected information regarding the status of competition of video/cable services by developing electronic surveys for use by franchise entities (which in Michigan are municipalities or other communities) and video/cable service providers operating throughout Michigan. The surveys, as well as the information collected from the surveys, are explained in further detail within the body of this report.

In addition to the survey information, this report provides a brief description of the Commission’s role as it pertains to the Act, as well as the Commission’s video/cable franchise activities (including complaint handling) during 2025. This report also includes information relating to recommendations for legislative changes and the Commission’s conclusion on the status of video/cable competition for 2025.

Responsibilities and Activities of the Commission

This section provides an overview and analysis of the responsibilities and activities of the Commission since the Act became effective, and more specifically, during the 2025 calendar year. These responsibilities and activities have been divided into the following categories: Statutory Responsibilities, Outreach, and Complaint Handling.

Statutory Responsibilities

This Act became effective on January 1, 2007. The Commission established a statewide uniform standardized form to be used by both video/cable service providers (providers) and franchise entities pursuant to Section 2(1) of the Act. The Uniform Video Service Local Franchise Agreement (Agreement) was formally

approved on January 30, 2007, by the Commission in Case No. U-15169. The Agreement can be found on the Video/Cable section of the Commission's website.¹

The Act required the Commission to develop a proposed dispute resolution process, which was submitted to the Legislature in compliance with Section 10(3) of the Act. Public Act 4 of 2009 established the video/cable dispute resolution process. The Commission offers the dispute resolution process for the following types of complaints: customer vs. provider; franchise entity vs. provider; and provider vs. provider.

The Act provides that a video service provider shall not deny access to service to any group of potential residential customers because of the race or income of the residents, pursuant to Section 9. In addition, the Act also provides that the Commission shall receive and rule on waiver requests from providers for an extension of requirements in Section 9 of the Act (deployment of services) and provides for the monitoring of the providers' compliance through annual reports. Commission Staff follow-up annually with the appropriate video/cable providers to ensure compliance with this section of the Act. To date, the Commission has not received any such waiver requests.

The Act also provides that video/cable providers shall notify their customers of the dispute resolution process under Section 10 of the Act. Commission Staff follow-up with video/cable providers annually to ensure compliance with the Act.

Lastly, the Act also requires providers to submit to the Commission any information requested by the Commission necessary for the preparation of the annual report required under Section 12 of the Act.

Outreach

Commission Staff continue to make efforts to communicate and meet with representatives from various cable companies as well as local municipalities to keep communication open between the Commission and those impacted by the Act. As in previous years, Staff mailed information regarding the Commission's Video/Cable Consumer Tips to over 1,700 municipalities in an effort to have the municipalities share the dispute resolution process and Commission's contact information with their residents, as well as provide information to municipalities regarding any issues that they may be encountering with their video/cable provider. Commission Staff also shared this information with the Michigan Municipal League and the Michigan Townships Association to distribute to their members.

Updates and enhancements are continually being made to the Commission's video franchise web page.² The video franchise web page provides a link to "Video/Cable Providers Operating in Michigan," where a person can view an updated list of all video/cable providers offering service, as well as contact information for each

¹ The Agreement, as well as the Act, can be located at:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/regulatory/telecommunications/video-cable>.

² MPSC Video/Cable web page:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/consumer/telecommunications/video>.

provider. In addition, there is a link on the telecommunications consumer information web page to Michigan's Interactive Broadband Map.³ The map is detailed, user-friendly, and allows users to see if Internet service – including Internet service offered by a video/cable provider – is available in a particular area, and if so, which providers are offering those services.⁴

Other information that can be found using the video franchise web page includes: 2006 PA 480, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), the Uniform Video Services Dispute Resolution Process (Public Act 4 of 2009), the Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Agreement, Video/Cable Consumer Tips,⁵ information on the process for filing an informal or formal complaint, an online complaint form, contact information for Video Franchise, and an archive containing previous Video Competition Reports.

Complaint/Inquiry Handling

Customers can contact the Commission with complaints and inquiries using several methods: by calling the Commission's toll-free telephone line; faxing, mailing, or submitting an online complaint form; or filing a complaint in person at the Commission office. Commission Staff also receive complaint and inquiry referrals from the Governor's office, Legislative staff, the Attorney General's office, the Director of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, and other state agencies.

After contacting the Commission, a customer record is created for each customer complaint and/or inquiry. These records allow the Commission to track the history and progress of the customer's complaint from initial contact to resolution and collect data to analyze complaint and inquiry trends. Commission Staff respond directly to a customer's inquiry or complaint, and complaints are forwarded to a video/cable provider complaint representative for resolution. The Commission follows the dispute resolution process as set forth in Public Act 4 of 2009.

Informal/Formal Customer Complaints

The Commission received 1,751 video/cable customer complaints and inquiries from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, a 117% increase from 2024.⁶ **Figure 1** below shows the number of video/cable complaints and inquiries filed at the Commission over the past five years (2021 – 2025):⁷

³ <https://gis.connectednation.org/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=98c4d702d00040c9be673787bfeb8162>.

⁴ The map provides broadband internet information from participating providers. In addition, since providers continually expand and enhance their infrastructure, it is recommended that consumers contact the potential provider for assurance that service is available and can be offered.

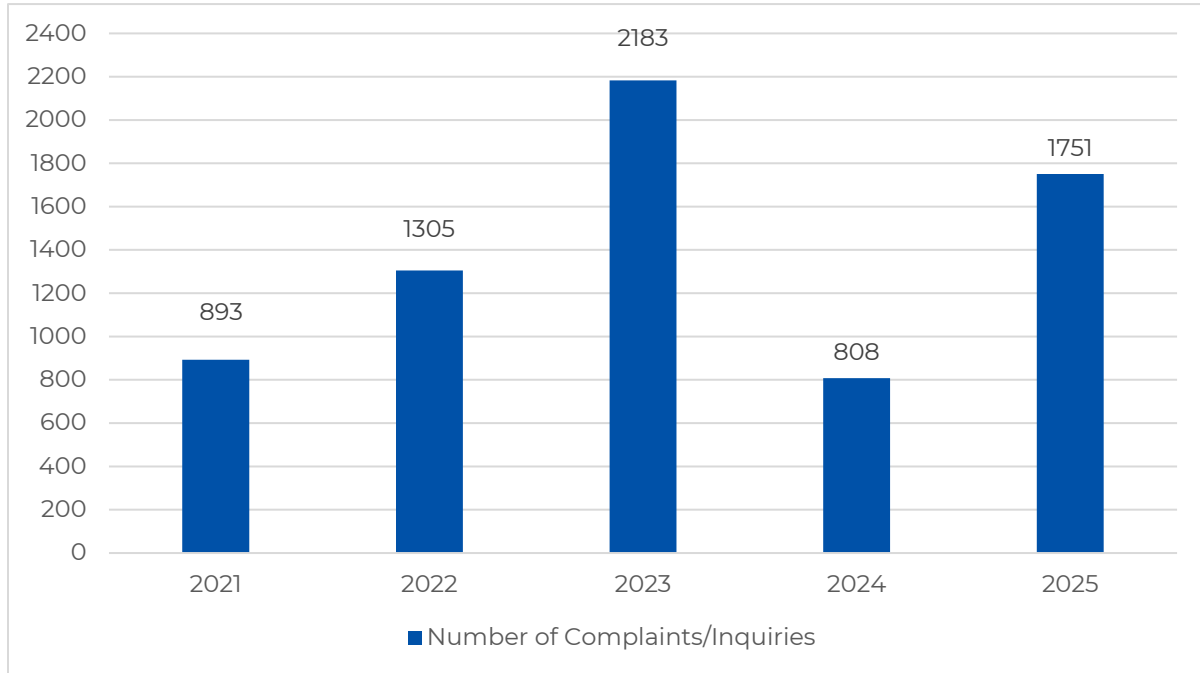
⁵ https://www.michigan.gov/mpsc/~/media/Project/Websites/mpsc/consumer/info/tips/telecom/Video_Cable_Complaints.pdf.

⁶ While 1,751 is the overall complaint number received, it is important to note that these complaints may involve more than one complaint issue.

⁷ The total reported number in Figure 1 only represents cable/video television specific complaints. MPSC Staff also received 434 cable/video complaints that were combined with telecommunications issues as well. Since these complaints involved more than just cable/video, these totals were not included in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Total Number of Video/Cable Complaints & Inquiries Reported to the Commission (2021-2025)



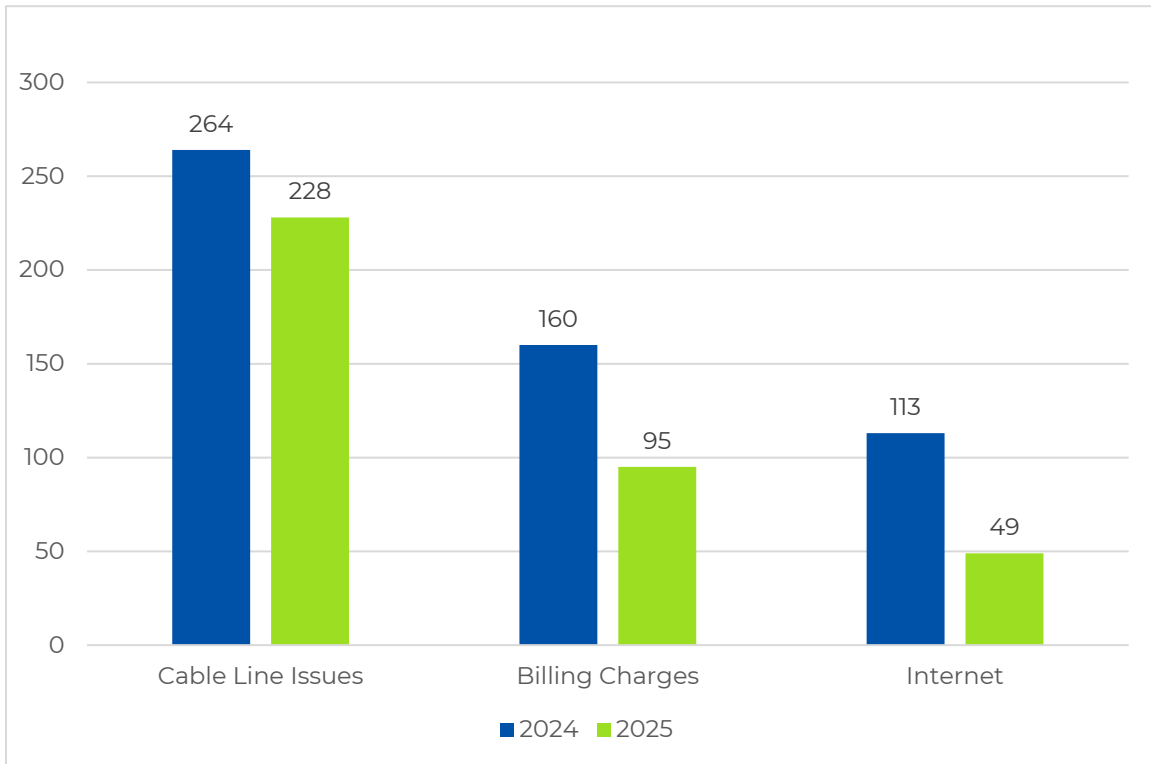
Source: MPSC Complaint Data

Follow-up calls and the reopening of a complaint are not documented as a new complaint unless the complaint consists of an additional problem not originally reported by the customer.

Commission Staff continue to assist customers on a variety of issues regarding billing, false/misleading information, equipment-service problems, cable line issues, customer service, and request for service – among others. **Figure 2** provides a listing of the most common types of video/cable complaints and inquiries filed with the Commission in 2025:

Figure 2

Most Common Video/Cable Complaints & Inquires



Source: MPSC Complaint Data

The numbers above show changes from the complaints and inquiries made in 2025, including decreases in cable line issues (down from 264 to 228) and in billing charge issues (down from 160 to 95). Internet complaints were in the top three categories of complaints with 49 complaints. Of the 28 cable providers operating in Michigan, the Commission received video/cable complaints and inquiries pertaining to 9 different cable providers. The three providers with the most complaints filed with the Commission in 2025 were Comcast (53%), Wide Open West Michigan (WOW!) (15%), and Charter (8%).

Customers who remain dissatisfied with the complaint resolution offered during the informal complaint process have the option to file a formal complaint pursuant to the Act. There was one formal complaint (U-22019) filed in 2025, which failed to meet the requirements of adjudication.

Video/Cable Provider vs. Franchise Entity Complaints

During 2025, the Commission did not receive any complaints filed on behalf of a franchise entity against a video/cable provider. Commission Staff continue to assist both franchise entities and providers in resolving any issues or concerns that may be occurring between the parties.

2025 Commission Survey to Franchise Entities and Providers

As in the past, the Commission continued to use its electronic survey for franchise entities, as well as a separate survey for providers.

Franchise Entities' Responses to the Commission Survey

Like previous years, the Commission posted the survey form on its website for franchise entities to complete. The online survey was available October 20, 2025, through November 17, 2025.

Although the franchise entity survey is not mandatory and not required by the Act, the Commission believes it is important to continue collecting information from municipalities regarding the video/cable environment in their communities. Commission Staff mailed over 1,700 letters to municipalities informing them of the survey. Commission Staff also asked the Michigan Municipal League and the Michigan Townships Association to email the letter and information to their members. The notification letters provided municipalities with information regarding the location and availability of the survey and encouraged communities to respond. Two Video Franchise Consumer Tip Sheets were also included: one that describes the dispute process for customers to file a video/cable complaint and one for municipalities that explains the process to file a complaint against a video/cable provider.

Commission Staff received 318 responses, which was a decrease of one from the previous year. The compiled responses provide a cross-section of information necessary for analyzing video/cable service and competition in Michigan. The Commission believes it is important to include this information in the report; however, the responses do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission.

Complaints

Of the 318 municipalities that responded to the 2025 survey, 282 indicated they no longer take video/cable complaints. The Commission has continued to try to inform municipalities about Public Act 4 of 2009 (the dispute resolution process), resulting in 191 of the respondents in this year's survey stating they are aware of Public Act 4 of 2009. 232 of responding municipalities indicated they are aware the Commission can assist customers, franchise entities, and providers with video/cable inquiries and/or complaints.

Of those municipalities that continue to respond to video/cable complaints from their residents, the four most frequent complaints received by municipalities pertain to rates,⁸ service equipment issues/outages, customer service, and billing issues.

⁸ Pursuant to 2006 PA 480, neither the Commission, nor the franchise entity, has regulatory authority over rates or other control over a provider. The Commission does not regulate video/cable rates.

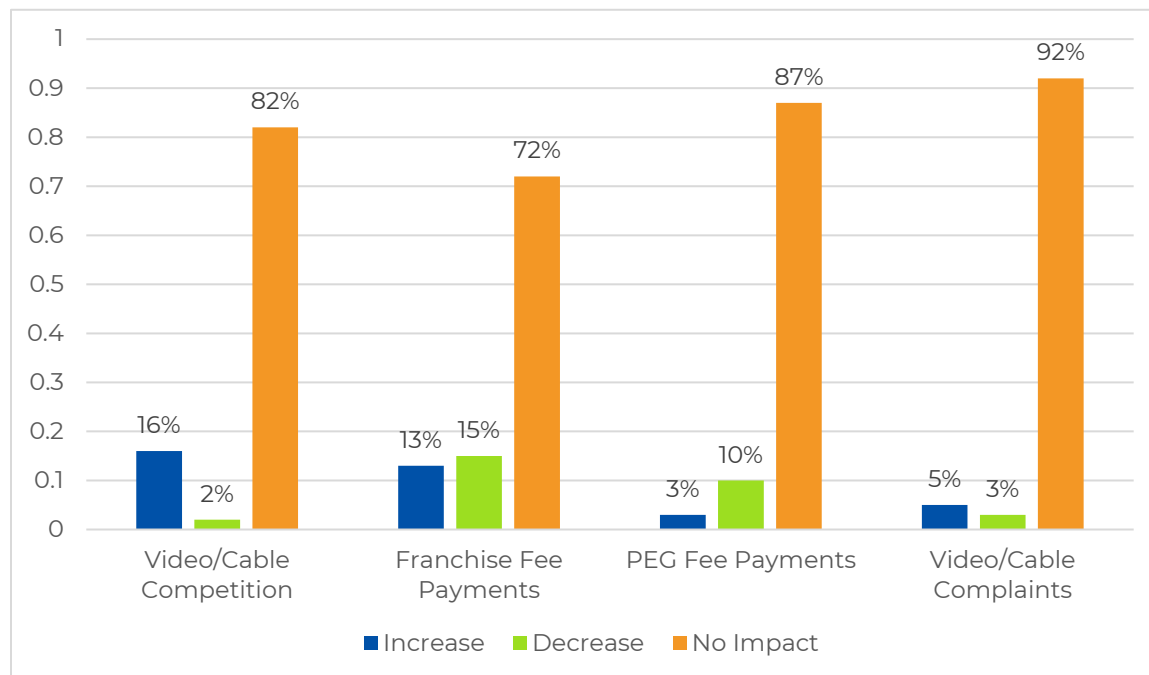
Although less frequently, municipalities also received various other complaints.⁹ In 2025, six municipalities indicated they had a dispute with a provider regarding a franchise agreement. The disputes were regarding franchise fees and Public, Education and Government (PEG) Fees.

Impact of the Video Franchise Act on Communities

Municipalities were surveyed regarding any impact they have witnessed within their community since the Act took effect. Like previous years, the impacts highlighted were: Video/Cable Competition; Franchise Fee Payments; Public, Education, and Government (PEG) Channel Fee Payments; and Video/Cable Complaints. **Figure 3** displays community responses relative to the four categories since the Act became effective:

Figure 3

Impact on Communities Since Act Became Effective



Source: MPSC Franchise Entity Survey

Again, like previous years, a high percentage of communities that responded reported no impact in each of the four categories.¹⁰

⁹ “Other” complaints received pertained to equipment maintenance concerns, availability, customer service, construction, reliability, and cable line issues.

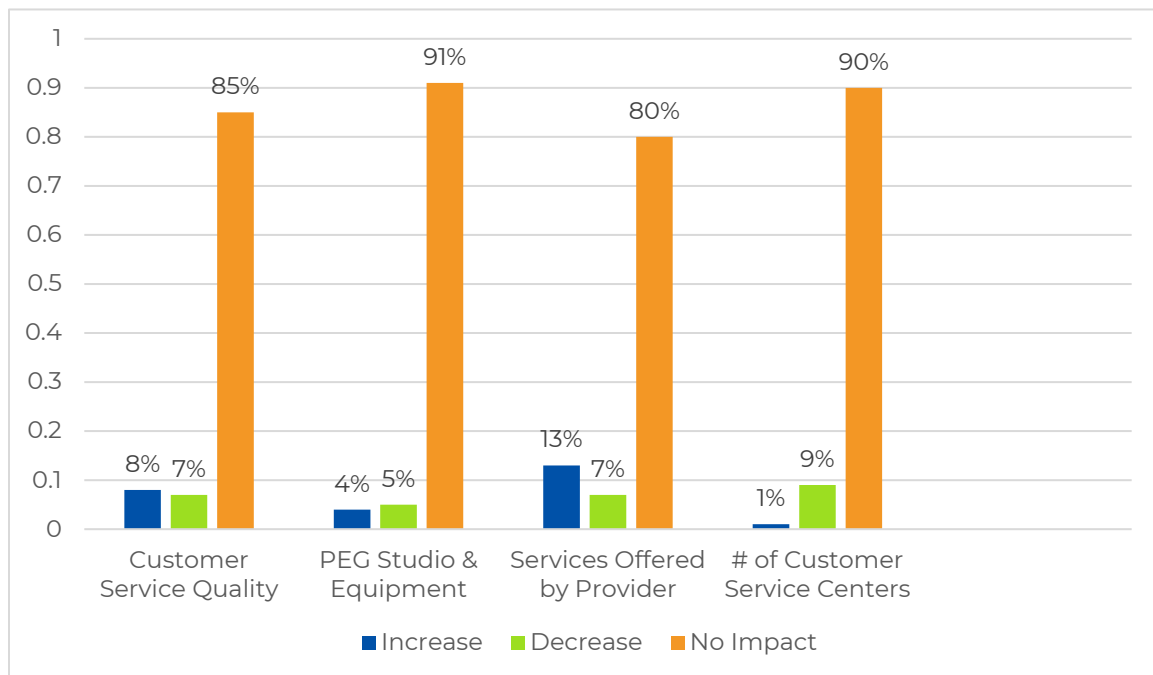
¹⁰ It is important to keep in mind that those communities that responded last year are not necessarily the same communities that responded this year. Therefore, it is important not to make a direct comparison and assume that this is representative of the entire state.

Changes in Quality of Service and/or Service Offerings of Providers

As in previous years, the Commission asked the municipalities to report any changes they perceived during 2025 regarding Customer Service Quality, PEG Studio and Equipment, Services Offered by Providers, and the Number of Customer Service Centers. **Figure 4** reflects those responses from the municipalities:

Figure 4

Impact on Quality of Service & Offerings in Communities Since Act Became Effective



Source: MPSC Franchise Entity Survey

For 2025, a large percentage of municipalities reported “no impact” in each of the four categories since the Act took effect. Municipalities also provided feedback regarding whether a PEG channel is available. Based on the responses received, 28% of municipalities indicated their community has a designated PEG channel.

Franchise Entities’ Suggestions or Comments

Franchise entities were provided the opportunity to offer any comments, recommendations, and/or suggestions.¹¹ The following summarized comments, organized by topic area, were received by the Commission:

¹¹ These recommendations and suggestions are the sole opinion of some of the franchise entities and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission. These recommendations and comments are the views of only those franchise entities who provided comment and do not necessarily reflect the same opinion of other franchise entities throughout Michigan.

Access:

A few franchise entities stated a concern for access to cable and internet services. These entities would like to see more options for residents in rural areas as well as expansion.

Customer Service:

One franchise entity stated that local customer service centers were needed, and another entity expressed frustration with customers not being able to speak to a live representative when issues arise.

Competition:

A few franchise entities stated that the lack of competition is still a concern for residential customers as well as businesses.

Franchise and PEG Fees:

A few franchise entities expressed similar concerns stating that there are now several broadband suppliers without franchise agreements. There's a worry about lost revenue due to residents shifting to streaming services. It was stated that there should be an emphasis on protecting PEG fees and franchise fees as it is essential for municipalities to fund safety and community information services. There is also a desire to include PEG fees when franchise agreements are renewed.

Streaming:

One franchise entity mentioned Xumo streaming boxes being offered as alternatives to traditional video service/cable boxes, further stating they believe this is a violation of PA480 and their franchise agreements. It was requested that the Commission investigate the matter. Additionally, a few franchise entities stated that there is a call to update legislation to match technological advances specifically by introducing a fee structure for streaming video services.

Miscellaneous Comments:

One franchise entity mentioned Comcast rates being too high. Another requested a list of cable/video providers that provide service to their area so that they may be able to form agreements.

Providers' Responses to the Commission Survey

In 2025, the Commission continued to use its electronic survey to gather responses from providers. The survey notification letter was sent by email on November 24, 2025, to all providers of video/cable service in Michigan and responses were due by December 8, 2025. The survey was also available on the Commission's web page

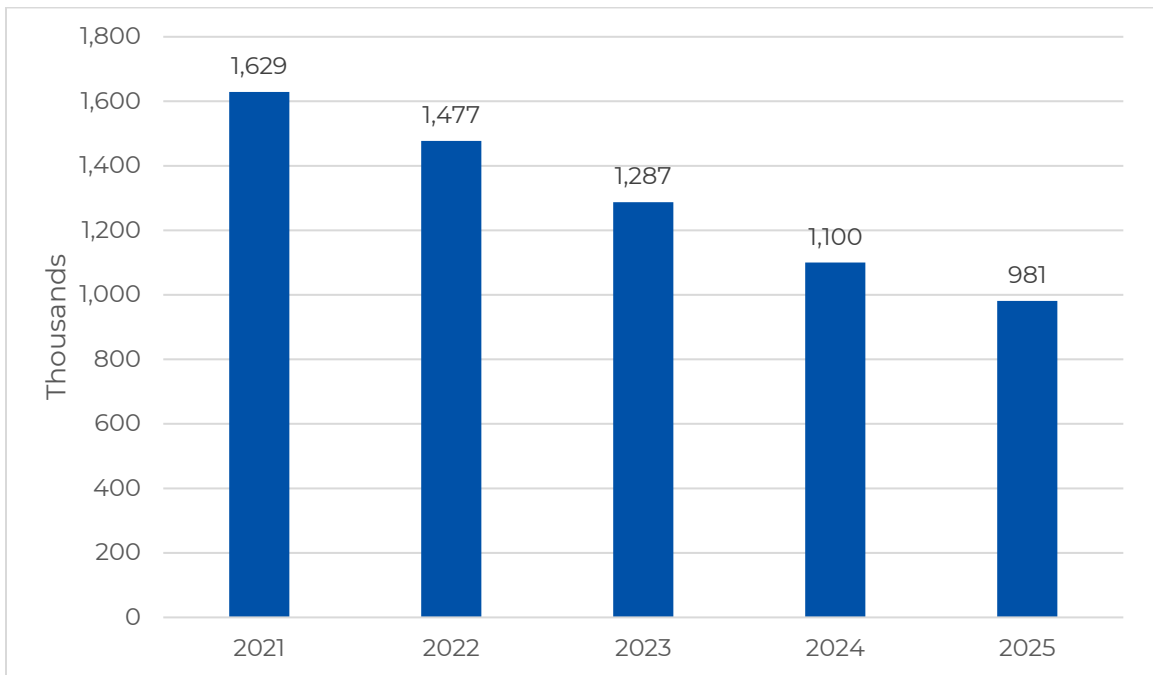
beginning November 24, 2025. A total of 28 video/cable providers were offering service in Michigan.¹²

Video/Cable Subscribers

During 2025, there were a total of 980,543¹³ video/cable customers reported for Michigan. This is a decrease of 120,093 customers compared to the number reported in 2024, and a nearly 40% drop over the past five years. **Figure 5** shows the changes in video/cable subscribership since 2021:

Figure 5

Total Number of Video/Cable Subscribers in Michigan



Source: MPSC Provider Survey

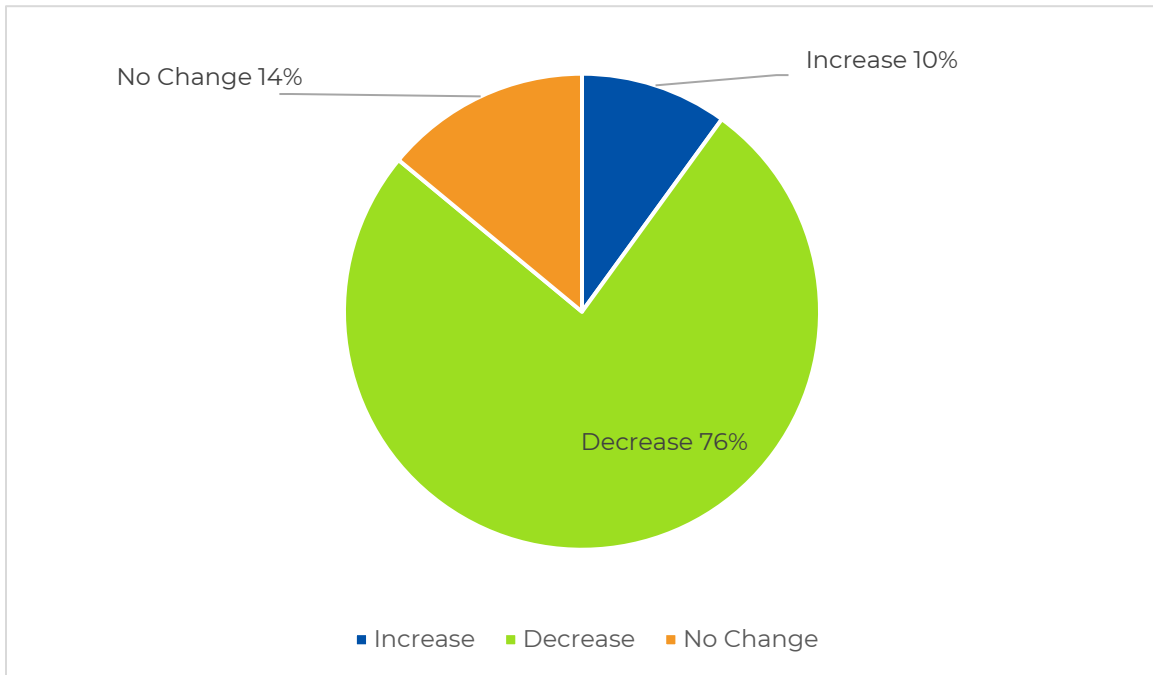
In addition to the overall number of subscribers, **Figure 6** shows the cumulative breakdown of the providers' customer bases in 2025:

¹² The overall number of video/cable providers operating in Michigan decreased from 29 providers in 2024 to 28 providers in 2025. Astrea was acquired by Charter Communications in 2024 and no longer provided service in 2025 under the Astrea brand. While Iron River Co-Op TV was acquired by Charter Communications in 2025, it continued to provide service as Iron River Co-Op TV.

¹³ This number does not include satellite providers. Satellite providers are not required to have franchise agreements with franchise entities and are not required to report to the Commission.

Figure 6

Changes to Providers' Customer Base (2025)



Source: MPSC Provider Survey

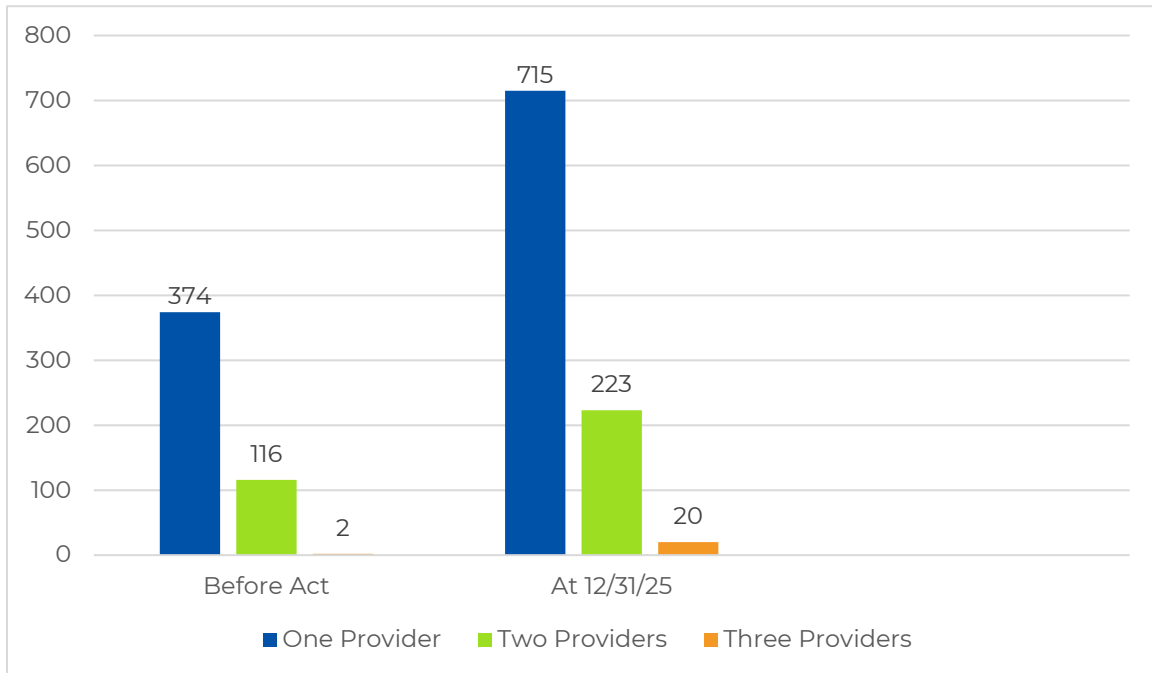
Video/Cable Competition

Overall, there are currently 2,270 franchise agreements in Michigan (both individual franchise agreements entered into before the Act that have not yet expired and the Uniform Video Service Local Franchise Agreements as required by the Act). When compared to 2024, this number has decreased by four.

Consistent with previous years, the Commission asked providers to submit information regarding the competition encountered in their franchise areas. Providers submitted information on the number of competing providers existing in their franchise areas before and since the Act took effect. Similar to previous years, providers have reported a continued increase of competitors entering their franchise areas. **Figure 7** shows this comparison:

Figure 7

Number of Competitors by Franchise Area Before Act (1/1/07) and as of (12/31/25)



Source: MPSC Provider Survey

Disputes

In 2025, one provider reported a dispute with a franchise entity. This dispute was regarding a right-of-way issue.

Video/Cable Providers' Improvements/Enhancements in 2025

Video/Cable providers were given the opportunity to provide information regarding improvements/enhancements to customer service, technical upgrades, or any other improvements made in 2025.¹⁴ Video/Cable providers offered the following information regarding improvements and/or enhancements they have made in 2025 regarding customer service, technical upgrades, service offerings, etc.:

- Converted offerings to local ABC, NBC, and Fox local channels with limited over-the-top channels as a support to streaming customers as they are not able to compete profitably in the cable television (CATV) market.
- Implemented the launch of 10-Gigabit Symmetrical Passive Optical Network (XGS-PON) for all new construction areas to support future >1G speeds.
- Upgraded many Standard Definition (SD) channels to High Definition (HD).
- Continued efforts to move customers from copper to fiber.

¹⁴ This information voluntarily submitted to the Commission should not be construed as verified by the Commission, nor should it be construed as the Commission supporting video/cable services of any particular provider.

- Fiber expansion as part of the Realizing Opportunity with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) Grant.
- Added new emergency generators and backup battery power supplies.
- Extended its network to reach an additional 39,000 homes and small businesses, including 13,000 new locations reached through a rural construction initiative.
- Promoted continued education to customer service representatives to enhance the customer's experience. The provider is also moving forward with fiber to the home, which will increase bandwidth for the customers while allowing more service options.
- Utilized a bandwidth management plan to upgrade nodes to relieve network congestion and provide more stability. Also, continued to make improvements to bandwidth to improve internet speeds to many customers so they can enjoy streaming videos.
- Upgraded modems and set up boxes.

Recommendations

This section provides the Commission's recommendations for legislative action pursuant to Section 12 (2) of the Act. The Commission offers the following three additional areas for consideration:

First, the Commission recommends that the Legislature extend the due date of the Status of Competition for Video Services in Michigan Annual Report from February 1 of each year to March 1 of each year. The current due date makes it difficult for respondents to provide timely and accurate year-end information to the Commission. This narrow timeline to receive information from respondents and thoroughly analyze that information so that the Commission can provide a report to the Legislature by February 1 forces the Commission to rely on estimates in some areas instead of actual numbers.

Second, the Commission recommends the following language be added to the Act: the name of the provider; a description of the services provided; the address and telephone number of the provider's principal office; the address and telephone number of the provider's registered agent authorized to receive service in this state; and any other information the Commission determines is necessary. This is similar to language currently found in Section 211(a) of the Michigan Telecommunications Act. Having this information would ensure the Commission has accurate contact information available to it for complaints, as well as for future information and data collection pursuant to the Act.

Third, the Commission recommends that if a company changes its name, goes out of business, or is merged into another company, it should be required to notify the Commission of this change. Providers do not submit their Franchise Agreements to the Commission – the Franchise Agreements are submitted to the individual franchise entities. As such, this information is not available to the Commission. The

Commission will continue to monitor the status of video/cable services competition in Michigan and inform the Legislature of any further recommendations for needed legislation.

Conclusion

The Commission, adhering to its responsibilities as set forth in Section 12(2) of the Act, provides the Governor and Legislature with this report that includes information related to the Commission's role, activities, and responsibilities, as well as summarizes the information that has been collected from franchise entities and providers, and the Commission's legislative recommendations.

As in past years since the Act took effect, there are now hundreds of franchise areas that have at least two video/cable providers. Video/cable providers continue to invest in the video/cable market in Michigan and enhance equipment, infrastructure, and service offerings to customers. The Commission will continue to educate and inform customers of the dispute resolution process and will continue to address complaints regarding video/cable services in Michigan.