



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Utilities Regulation & Competition Authority

Phone: 393-0234

Fax: 393-0188

info@urcabahamas.bs

www.urcabahamas.bs

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URCA's Role as a Regulator

The Utilities Regulation & Competition Authority (URCA) has taken note of the letter that appeared in The Tribune on August 26th, 2010 authored by Gene Gibson under the headline "Questions for Cable Bahamas, shareholders and government." While Mr. Gibson raises some interesting questions, URCA wishes to clarify, specifically, its role as regulator of the Electronic Communications Sector, which includes Broadcasting and Cable TV.

URCA has the duty to issue licences for and regulate the Electronic Communications Sector (ECS) services by exercising the powers given to it under the Communications Act 2009. URCA is also required to protect the interests of consumers of ECS services; therefore, URCA monitors and enforces the consumer protection conditions that are set out in the licences of service providers.

However, URCA does not regulate copyright infringements or other issues concerning intellectual property. Those matters are investigated and enforced by agencies of the Government.

Regarding late fees and other penalties, a subscriber to any service takes the service by entering into a contractual agreement with the service provider. Therefore, it is important that consumers read their contracts to ensure they understand the terms and conditions under which the provider has contracted to deliver the particular service(s). While, customers have the right to be fully informed of the terms under which the service is delivered they also have a responsibility to fulfill their obligation under the contract and, in this regard, meeting the contractual requirements for payment for the services delivered is an obligation. Therefore, if late fees and other penalties apply under the contract, when the service is not paid for within an allowed grace period, the provider may decide to enforce those conditions.

URCA remains fair & transparent in its decisions. It should be noted that any person who wishes URCA to launch a formal investigation into CBL's operations on the level of late fees, or any other relevant matter, may submit a formal (confidential) complaint to URCA via email to info@urcabahamas.bs