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URCA Releases Revisions to the Retail Pricing Rules

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority ('URCA') issues the Statement of Results and Final Decision (ECS 03/2025) along with the revised Retail Pricing Rules (ECS 04/2025).

URCA completed a review of key retail fixed electronic communications services markets, covering fixed voice (or landline), fixed broadband, and pay TV services on 1 August 2024.¹ One of the outcomes of the market review is the revision of the Retail Pricing Rules (ECS 06/2014) which have been in place since 16 April 2014.

The Retail Pricing Rules, also referred to as the Rules, apply to operators who are designated as having Significant Market Power (SMP) in specified product markets. The Rules outline the procedures that SMP providers must follow when introducing new services, modifying the prices or terms and conditions of existing services, or withdrawing/discontinuing a service.

URCA published a consultation document on 4 December 2024 seeking feedback from interested parties on its proposed revisions to the Retail Pricing Rules. URCA received written responses from The Bahamas Telecommunications Company Limited ('BTC') and Cable Bahamas Limited ('CBL').

Having reviewed the feedback from the consultation, URCA responds to the feedback and provides its conclusions in the Statement of Results (ECS 03/2025). The revised Retail Pricing Rules (ECS 04/2025) will repeal and replace the previous Retail Pricing Rules and will come into effect immediately upon publication.

The revised Rules allow SMP operators more flexibility while still allowing URCA to monitor changes and developments and protect consumers from excessive pricing. The key requirements are summarised below.

¹ ECS 71/2024 <https://urcabahamas.bs/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/URCA-SOR-and-Final-Determination-Retail-Fixed-Market-Review-2024-Redacted.pdf>

Table 1: Approval and Notification Requirements for Regulated Services

	Key requirements
Permanent, above-inflation price increase of a Price Capped Service	Approval
Permanent, equal to inflation or below-inflation price changes to a Price Capped Service	Notification
Permanent price changes to a Non Price Capped Service	Notification
Withdrawal/Discontinuation of a Required Service	Approval
Withdrawal/Discontinuation of other Regulated Services	Notification
Introduction of a new Price Capped Service	Approval
Introduction of a new Non Price Capped Service	Notification
Changes to non-price terms and conditions of a Regulated Service	Notification

Previously, SMP operators had to apply for URCA's approval before introducing any permanent price change, whether it was an increase or decrease. Now, URCA's approval is only required if an SMP operator wants to increase the price of a Price Capped Service above last year's inflation. The Price Capped Services are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: BTC's and CBL's Price Capped Services

SMP Provider	Price Capped Services
Retail fixed voice services	
BTC	Entry-level standalone fixed voice plans for residential and business customers
Retail fixed broadband services	

CBL	Entry-level standalone fixed broadband plans for residential and business customers
BTC	Entry-level standalone fixed broadband plans for residential and business customers
Retail pay TV services	
CBL	Entry-level standalone pay TV plans for residential and business customers

For more details, the documents are available at www.urcabahamas.bs.

About URCA:

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) is the regulatory body responsible for overseeing the electronic communications, broadcasting, and electricity sectors in The Bahamas. URCA aims to promote competition, fair pricing, and innovation within these industries for the benefit of all Bahamians.

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