

Response to Questions on the FY 2005 Advertised Budget Plan

Request By: Chairman Connolly

Question: What are the total cable complaints that the Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection (DCCCP) received and investigated in FY 2003 and FY 2004? Has the completed upgrade of Cox Communications' cable system resulted in reduced cable complaints investigated by the DCCCP? If so, has that reduction been factored in to the estimated 4,500 valid complaints estimated for FY 2005?

Response: The total number of valid cable-related complaints investigated by the Department in FY 2003 was 2,446 and approximately 1,600 cable-related complaints are projected for FY 2004. This reduction in cable-related complaints is largely due to the completed upgrade of Cox Communications' cable system in May 2003.

A similar cable complaint workload level is expected for FY 2005 as in FY 2004 and the reduction has been factored into the estimated 4,500 valid complaints estimated for FY 2005. Although the Department expects fewer cable complaints than in previous years, the decrease is expected to be partially offset by an increase in other types of cable company complaints that the Department is responsible for investigating. Specifically, Cox Communications has recently informed the County that it plans to offer telephone service starting in the fall of 2004 (FY 2005), which is likely to cause a significant surge in complaints. This assumption is based on the high volume of customers served by Cox Communications in the County, and the Department's prior experiences when new services are offered by a vendor, typically resulting in initial increases in consumer complaints.