

**BEFORE THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554**

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| In the Matter of: |) | |
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| Telephone Number Portability |) | WC Docket No. 95-116 |
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COMMENTS OF THE IOWA UTILITIES BOARD

On December 20, 2006, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) released a petition filed by T-Mobile USA, Inc. and Sprint Nextel Corporation (Petitioners) for comment. The Petitioners request the Commission clarify that local exchange carriers (LECs) providing local number portability (LNP) may not obstruct or delay the porting process by demanding information from requesting carriers beyond that required to validate the customer request and to accomplish the port. The Petitioners maintain that some LECs are requesting excessive amounts of information in order to process number portability orders from wireless carriers. In order to complete a porting request from a wireless carrier, these LECs may require completion of forms with more than 100 data fields. If just one piece of information is in error, the LEC will reject the porting request. The porting rejections translate into considerable inconvenience for consumers who must often wait a week or more to port their telephone numbers from a LEC to a wireless carrier. According to the Petitioners, these delays frustrate Congressional and Commission intent by discouraging competition.

In contrast, the Petitioners state that the wireless industry has developed expeditious porting procedures requiring only a limited amount of validation criteria. Thus, wireless-to-wireless ports are generally accepted or denied within 30 minutes, and the entire port activation is generally completed within two and one-half hours. The Petitioners maintain that the large number of data fields required by the LECs to validate LNP is unnecessary because validations can be accomplished using just four data fields. Accordingly, the Petitioners urge the Commission to rule that requiring validations beyond the four criteria is unnecessary.

The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) agrees that the Commission should address this issue for two reasons. First, it would appear that LECs might be using unnecessarily burdensome validation procedures to thwart competition from wireless carriers. Since 1996, it has been the intent of Congress and the Commission to promote competition in the telecommunications industry. To promote competition, Congress specifically enacted a requirement that LECs “provide” local number portability.¹ In requiring LECs to provide LNP, it is likely that Congress intended for it to be provided without overly burdensome validation procedures. Thus, the Commission should evaluate whether the validation procedures employed by LECs can be further streamlined as suggested by the Petitioners.

Second, the current validation procedures employed by LECs could be contributing to telephone number exhaust. If current validation procedures

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 251(b)(2)

stand in the way of wireline consumers porting their existing telephone numbers, then those consumers will simply request new telephone numbers from wireless carriers. To fill this demand, wireless carriers will be forced to order additional blocks of telephone numbers from the NANPA or the Pooling Administrator. If consumers were able to expeditiously port their telephone numbers, demand for new blocks of telephone numbers from wireless carriers could be reduced.

Recommendation

The IUB recommends that the Commission evaluate whether the validation procedures employed by LECs when porting telephone numbers to wireless carriers can be streamlined. Streamlining these validation procedures would serve to promote competition within the telecommunications industry and slow the exhaust of telephone numbering resources.

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