

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Telephone Number Portability)	CC Docket No. 95-116
)	
Numbering Resource Optimization)	CC Docket No. 99-200

ORDER

Adopted: September 21, 2017**Released: September 21, 2017**

By the Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau:

1. On September 18, 2017, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security, declared the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico a major disaster due to Hurricane Maria.¹ Hurricane Maria is moving through the Caribbean, striking the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.² Hurricane Maria has caused significant damage in the areas within its path, including storm surge, wind damage, and flooding, and has resulted in significant property damage and personal injury. It has also caused substantial service disruptions and outages in telephone service in all areas it has affected. Hurricane Jose is moving up the East Coast of the United States, and although not expected to make landfall, sustained winds and rainfall could cause significant damage, flooding, and service disruptions.³ In an effort to assist the telecommunications industry as it restores service in the affected areas, we grant, on our own motion, a temporary waiver of the Commission's rule for aging telephone numbers for residential customers in those areas declared a major disaster due to Hurricane Maria and possibly Hurricane Jose,⁴ and the numbering administrators that support them, to deviate from section 52.15(f)(ii) of the Commission's rules regarding number assignments. Section 52.15(f)(ii) of the Commission's rules allows carriers to age numbers for no more than 90 days before making them available for assignment to

¹ See FEMA, President Donald J. Trump Signs Emergency Declaration for Puerto Rico (Sept. 18, 2017), <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2017/09/18/president-donald-j-trump-signs-emergency-declaration-puerto-rico>; see also FEMA, President Donald J. Trump Signs Emergency Declaration for the U.S. Virgin Islands (Sept. 18, 2017), <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2017/09/18/president-donald-j-trump-signs-emergency-declaration-us-virgin-islands>. Currently, no emergency declarations have been declared as a result of Hurricane Jose. Nevertheless, if such declarations are made, this Order will apply to those states as well.

² NOAA, National Hurricane Center, Hurricane Maria, http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/graphics_at5.shtml?cone#contents (last visited Sept. 21, 2017).

³ NOAA, National Hurricane Center, Hurricane Jose, http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/graphics_at2.shtml?cone#contents (last visited Sept. 21, 2017).

⁴ See 47 C.F.R. § 52.15(f)(ii) ("Aging numbers are disconnected numbers that are not available for assignment to another end user or customer for a specified period of time. Numbers previously assigned to residential customers may be aged for no more than 90 days.")

other customers.⁵ If territories or states were previously covered in a prior waiver order, this order supplements that order and extends the waiver time period.⁶

2. Section 1.3 of our rules authorizes the Commission to suspend, revoke, amend, or waive a Commission rule for good cause shown.⁷ In order to promote the maintenance and rebuilding of communities affected by Hurricanes Maria, and communities that may be affected by Hurricane Jose, and to facilitate continued access to telecommunications services for disaster victims, it is in the public interest to temporarily waive section 52.15(f)(ii) of the Commission's rules. That rule requires service providers to age numbers for no more than 90 days before making the numbers available for reassignment. Waiver of section 52.15(f)(ii) will allow carriers in the affected areas, upon customers' request, to disconnect temporarily customers' telephone service to avoid billing issues, and then reinstate the same numbers when service is reconnected in those areas. This waiver applies to all companies that provide service in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, and in any states declared states of emergency as a result of Hurricanes Maria and Jose. This waiver is in effect immediately and for a nine-month period, expiring on June 20, 2018. If service providers are unable to resume service on a normal basis after this period, they may request additional relief from the Wireline Competition Bureau.

3. Also, because of substantial damage to telecommunications systems we expect to be caused by Hurricane Maria, and possibly by Hurricane Jose, to areas within their paths, we recognize that customers in the affected rate centers may desire to port numbers to locations outside those rate centers. Therefore, during this period of service interruption, we encourage service providers to port telephone numbers geographically outside a rate center to the extent it is technically feasible. We also encourage all providers in the areas affected by Hurricane Maria, and those possibly affected by Hurricane Jose, to waive call forwarding, message center, and voicemail service charges for affected customers, to the extent lawfully permitted, until the customers' service is restored.

4. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to sections 4(i), 251(b)(2), and 251(e) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 251(b)(2) and 251(e), and sections 0.291 and 1.3 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.291, 1.3, that section 52.15(f)(ii), 47 C.F.R. § 52.15(f)(ii), is waived to the extent herein described herein.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Kris A. Monteith
Chief
Wireline Competition Bureau

⁵ See *id.*

⁶ See *Telephone Number Portability; Numbering Resource Optimization Order*, CC Docket No. 95-116; CC Docket No. 99-200, Order, DA 17-852 (WCB Sept. 6, 2017).

⁷ 47 CFR § 1.3. This rule provides that "[a]ny provision of the rules may be waived by the Commission on its own motion or on petition if good cause therefore is shown." *Id.*