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Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C.

In the Matter of

Petition of the Connecticut Department)	
Public Utility Control To Retain)	
Regulatory Control of the Rates of)	PR Docket No. 94-106
Wholesale Cellular Service Providers in)	
the State of Connecticut)	

REPORT AND ORDER

Adopted: May 8, 1995; Released: May 19, 1995

By the Commission:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On August 8, 1994, the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control ("DPUC"), on behalf of the state, filed a petition with this Commission, requesting authority to continue regulating wholesale cellular service providers.¹ Six parties filed pleadings opposing the petition, and eleven parties filed pleadings supporting it.² By this action, we deny the petition because it fails to satisfy the statutory standard Congress established for extending state regulatory authority over CMRS rates.

II. BACKGROUND

2. In 1993, Congress amended the Communications Act ("Act") to revise fundamentally the statutory system of licensing and regulating wireless (*i.e.*, radio)

¹ Petition of the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control To Retain Regulatory Control of the Rates of Wholesale Cellular Service Providers in the State of Connecticut, PR File No. 94-106, filed Aug. 8, 1994 (hereinafter "Connecticut Petition").

² Parties that filed pleadings in this proceeding are listed in Appendix A.

telecommunications services.³ Among other things, Congress: (1) established new classifications of “commercial” and “private” mobile radio services (“CMRS” and “PMRS,” respectively) in order to enable similar wireless services to be regulated symmetrically in ways that promote marketplace competition;⁴ (2) reallocated up to 200 megahertz of spectrum from government to private use so as to expand opportunities for innovative utilization of spectrum by the private sector;⁵ and (3) authorized competitive bidding as a means of improving licensing efficiency within the context of the Act’s public interest goals, which include promoting investment in new and innovative wireless telecommunications technologies.⁶

3. Congress also provided that, as of August 10, 1994, no state or local government shall have authority to regulate “the entry of or the rates charged” for CMRS and PMRS services, although states are permitted to regulate the “other terms and conditions” of CMRS.⁷ As an exception to this general rule, Congress also provided that, if a state had “any regulation” concerning the rates for any commercial mobile radio service in effect as of June 1, 1993, it could retain its rate regulation authority by petitioning the Commission no later than August 9, 1994, and demonstrating that either: (1) “market conditions with respect to such services fail to protect subscribers adequately from unjust and unreasonable rates or rates that are unjustly or unreasonably discriminatory;” or (2) “such market conditions exist and such service is a replacement for land line telephone exchange service for a substantial portion of the telephone land line exchange service within such State.”⁸

4. In our proceeding to implement OBRA, we concluded that, since Congress intended generally to preempt state and local rate and entry regulation of CMRS, a state

³ See Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, Pub. L. No. 103-66, Title VI, § 6002 (“OBRA” or “Budget Act”), *codified in principal part at* 47 U.S.C. § 332.

⁴ See Implementation of Sections 3(n) and 332 of the Communications Act, Regulatory Treatment of Mobile Services, Second Report and Order, 9 FCC Rcd 1411, 1417-18 (1994) (*CMRS Second Report and Order*), *reconsideration pending*.

⁵ National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act, § 113(b)(1).

⁶ The competitive bidding methodology is to promote “the development and rapid deployment of new technologies, products, and services for the benefit of the public, including those residing in rural areas, without administrative or judicial delays” 47 U.S.C. § 309(j)(3)(A). Regulations for the conduct of such auctions, when they prescribe area designations and bandwidth assignments, are required by OBRA to promote “investment in and rapid deployment of new technologies and services.” 47 U.S.C. § 309(j)(4)(C)(iii).

⁷ See 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(3)(A).

⁸ See 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(3)(B).

seeking to retain regulatory authority must “clear substantial hurdles” in demonstrating that continued regulation is warranted.⁹ We also determined that the nature of a state’s burden of proof is delineated generally by the statute itself. Specifically, we found that:¹⁰

[I]n implementing the preemption provisions of the new statute, we have provided that states must, consistent with the statute, clear substantial hurdles if they seek to continue or initiate rate regulation of CMRS providers. While we recognize that states have a legitimate interest in protecting the interests of telecommunications users in their jurisdictions, we also believe that competition is a strong protector of these interests and that state regulation in this context could inadvertently become as [*sic*] a burden to the development of this competition. Our preemption rules will help promote investment in the wireless infrastructure by preventing burdensome and unnecessary state regulatory practices that impede our Federal mandate for regulatory parity.

5. We also concluded that, while a state should have discretion to submit whatever evidence it believes is persuasive, a petition to retain regulatory authority must be grounded on demonstrable evidence.¹¹ In that regard, we adopted Section 20.13 of our Rules as a guide to the kinds of evidence and information that we would consider to be pertinent and helpful to our consideration of a state petition.¹² Moreover, in addition to the evidence, information, and analysis that a state must submit, we determined that a petitioning state also is required to identify and provide a detailed description of the specific existing or proposed rules that it would continue or establish if we were to grant its petition.¹³ We noted that the standards for preemption established in *Louisiana PSC* do not apply to petitions submitted under Section 332 of the Act, nor to Section 20.13 of our Rules.¹⁴ In *Louisiana PSC* the

⁹ See *CMRS Second Report and Order*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1504.

¹⁰ *Id.*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1421.

¹¹ *Id.*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1504.

¹² 47 C.F.R. § 20.13.

¹³ See *CMRS Second Report and Order*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1505.

¹⁴ Under *Louisiana PSC*, the Commission may preempt state regulation of intrastate service when it is not possible to separate the interstate and intrastate components of the asserted Commission regulation. *Louisiana Pub. Ser. Comm’n v. FCC*, 476 U.S. 355, 375 n.4 (1986). In construing the “inseparability doctrine” recognized by the Supreme Court in *Louisiana PSC*, Federal courts have held that where interstate services are jurisdictionally “mixed” with intrastate services and facilities otherwise regulated by the states, state regulation of the intrastate service that affects interstate service

Supreme Court found that Section 2(b) of the Communications Act prohibits the Commission from exercising Federal jurisdiction with respect to “charges, classifications, practices, services, facilities, or regulations for or in connection with intrastate communications services.”¹⁵ Here, Congress has explicitly amended the Communications Act to preempt state and local rate and entry regulation of commercial mobile radio services without regard to Section 2(b).

III. DECISIONAL FRAMEWORK

6. In order to prevail on the merits, the DPUC must sustain its statutory burden of demonstrating that “market conditions with respect to [commercial mobile radio] services fail to protect subscribers adequately from unjust and unreasonable rates or rates that are unjustly or unreasonably discriminatory.”¹⁶ A question arises as to what showing is necessary to sustain this burden. Although we addressed this issue in the *CMRS Second Report and Order*, we revisit it in view of the parties’ debate in this record.¹⁷ As explained more fully below, we do not agree that our decision to forbear from regulating interstate CMRS under certain provisions of Title II makes it impossible to grant a state’s petition. At the same time, we conclude that a state must do more than merely show that market conditions for cellular service¹⁸ have been less than fully competitive in the past. In order to retain regulatory authority, a state must show that, given the rapidly evolving market structure in which mobile services are provided, the conduct and performance of CMRS providers ill-serve consumer interests by producing rates that are not just and reasonable, or are unreasonably discriminatory.

may be preempted where the state regulation thwarts or impedes a valid Federal policy. See *California v. FCC*, 905 F.2d 1217 (9th Cir. 1990); *Illinois Bell Tel. v. FCC*, 883 F.2d 104 (D.C. Cir. 1989); *National Ass’n of Reg. Util. Comm’ners v. FCC*, 880 F.2d 422 (D.C. Cir. 1989).

¹⁵ *Louisiana PSC*, 476 U.S. at 373, quoting Communications Act, § 2(b), 47 U.S.C. § 152(b).

¹⁶ 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(3).

¹⁷ *E.g.*, CTIA Reply Comments at 1 (the proper standard for retaining state regulation depends upon a finding of insufficient competition, not market dominance); McCaw Comments at 11 (the DPUC must demonstrate that market conditions in Connecticut are substantially less competitive than the FCC found in its general assessment, that Federal remedies are inadequate to address such conditions, and that any residual benefits of state regulation outweigh the costs of regulation recognized by the Commission); BAMM Comments at 7-9 (the DPUC must demonstrate that its rate regulation is necessary to protect consumers); DPUC Reply Comments at 1; CTCS and CM Comments at 3 (Section 332 of the OBRA does not require a heightened standard of proof on the part of a petitioning state).

¹⁸ Although the provisions of Section 332(c)(3) of the Act apply to rate or entry regulation in the case of any commercial mobile radio service provider, the DPUC Petition is oriented to the provision of cellular service.

7. Since the Budget Act does not explicitly construe or elaborate on the statutory phrase “market conditions ... fail to protect subscribers adequately from unjust and unreasonable rates or rates that are unjustly or unreasonably discriminatory[,]” we look to the “design of the statute as a whole and its object and policy” to give that phrase meaning.¹⁹ We begin that task by reference to other Sections of the Communications Act, such as Section 201, which also speak of just and reasonable rates.²⁰ We have generally described the measure of reasonableness under these Sections in terms of rates that reflect or emulate competitive market operations.²¹ The more formal description, however, is whether rates fall within a “zone of reasonableness” that is bounded at one end by the “investor interest in maintaining financial integrity and access to capital markets” and at the other by the “consumer interest in being charged non-exploitative rates.”²² Regardless of how the test is characterized, it is well established that determinations whether rates fall within this zone are not dictated by reference to carriers’ costs and earnings,²³ but may take account of non-cost considerations such as whether rates further the public interest by tending to increase the supply of the item being produced and sold.²⁴ These principles define basic components of a

¹⁹ See *Crandon v. United States*, 494 U.S. 152, 157 (1990); *McCarthy v. Bronson*, 500 U.S. 136, 139 (1991).

²⁰ See 47 U.S.C. § 201; see also 47 U.S.C. §§ 623 (b)-(c) (provisions governing reasonableness of cable television rates).

²¹ See Policy and Rules Concerning Rates for Dominant Carriers, CC Docket No. 87-313, 4 FCC Rcd 2873, 2886 (para. 25), 2889-2900 (1989); see also Implementation of Sections of the Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992: Rate Regulation, MM Docket Nos. 92-266 & 93-215, FCC 94-286, released Nov. 18, 1994, at paras. 24, 34-37, 64-79.

²² See, e.g., *FERC v. Pennzoil Producing*, 439 U.S. 508, 517 (1979); *AT&T v. FCC*, 836 F.2d 1386, 1390 (D.C. Cir. 1988); see also *FPC v. Hope Natural Gas*, 320 U.S. 591, 602 (1944); *Duquesne Light Co. v. Barasch*, 488 U.S. 299, 308 (1989).

²³ See *FERC v. Pennzoil Producing*, 439 U.S. 508, 517 (1979) (the zone of reasonableness is not defined by a “rigidly . . . cost-based determination of rates, much less . . . one that bases each [carrier’s] rates on its own costs.”) (citation omitted); see also *Permian Basin Area Rate Cases*, 390 U.S. 747, 769, 797-98, 800-05, *reh’g denied*, *Bass v. FPC*, 392 U.S. 917 (1968) (upholding ratemaking based upon area-wide average costs).

²⁴ See, e.g., *Mobil Oil Corp. v. FPC*, 417 U.S. 283 (1974), in which the Supreme Court upheld a Federal Power Commission incentive plan that permitted an increase in rates in order to encourage increased production. In doing so, the Court emphasized that it was permissible for the agency to consider non-cost factors:

Mobil’s argument assumes that there is only one just and reasonable rate possible for each vintage of gas, and that this rate must be based entirely on some concept of cost plus a reasonable rate of return. We rejected this argument in *Permian Basin* and we reject it again here.

state's demonstration under Section 332. Specifically, a state must show that market conditions fail to produce rates that fall within a "zone of reasonableness," which is defined by reference to investor and consumer interests viewed in the context of relevant public policy considerations.

8. We also consider the meaning of the relevant language in the statute in the context of the overarching command of Section 332(c)(3), which is: "no State ... shall have any authority to regulate" CMRS rates.²⁵ As we concluded in the *CMRS Second Report and Order*, that provision, as well as the title of Section 332(c)(3) ("State Preemption"), express an unambiguous congressional intent to foreclose state regulation in the first instance.²⁶ Moreover, OBRA reflects a general preference in favor of reliance on market forces rather than regulation. Section 332(c), for example, empowers the Commission to reduce CMRS regulation,²⁷ and it places on us the burden of demonstrating that continued regulation will promote competitive market conditions.²⁸

9. Unlike some of the opponents of the DPUC Petition, we do not view the statutory preference for market forces rather than regulation in absolute terms. If Congress had desired to foreclose state and Federal regulation of CMRS entirely, it could have done so easily. It chose instead to delineate the circumstances in which such regulation might be applied. Tellingly, it did so in the context of a broad statutory framework with several other principal components. Under the OBRA: (1) substantial amounts of spectrum reserved for Federal government use are to be identified and transferred to commercial and public safety uses;²⁹ (2) this and other available spectrum, if allocated to commercial telecommunications uses, are to be licensed "rapidly" through the use of competitive bidding systems to promote the development and deployment of new technologies, products, and services, with the goal

The Commission explicitly based its additional "non-cost" incentives on the evidence of a need for increased supplies.

Id. at 316. *See also* *Farmers Union Cent. Exch. v. FERC*, 734 F.2d 1486, 1502-03 (D.C. Cir), *cert. denied*, 469 U.S. 1034 (1984) (acknowledging agency authority to consider non-cost factors in establishing just and reasonable rates); *Public Service Comm'n of New York v. FERC*, 589 F.2d 542, 559 (D.C. Cir. 1978) (stating that agencies have authority to adopt incentive-based regulatory approaches in order to serve the public interest).

²⁵ 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(3).

²⁶ *CMRS Second Report and Order*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1504.

²⁷ 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(1)(A).

²⁸ 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(1)(C).

²⁹ OBRA § 6001, amending the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act.

of stimulating economic opportunity and competition;³⁰ and (3) in contemplation of the deployment of spectrum to commercial wireless services, and to promote regulatory parity, Congress also articulated definitional criteria for determining common carrier status consistently so success in the marketplace will not be determined by regulatory strategies but by technological innovation, service quality, competition-based pricing decisions, and responsiveness to consumer needs.³¹

10. Viewing all three components together, the statutory plan is clear. Congress envisioned an economically vibrant and competitive market for CMRS services. It understood that such a market was still evolving,³² and it provided the resources (*e.g.*, additional spectrum) and administrative authority (*e.g.*, licensing through competitive bidding) to accelerate that process. Finally, Congress delineated its preference for allowing this emerging market to develop subject to only as much regulation for which the Commission and the states could demonstrate a clear cut need. The public interest goal of this Congressional plan is readily discernable. Congress intended to promote rapid deployment of a wireless telecommunications infrastructure. Robust investment is a prerequisite to achieving that goal.³³ Thus, in implementing the statute, we have attempted to facilitate the achievement of this goal by ensuring that regulation creates positive incentives for efficient investment -- rather than burdening entrepreneurial activities -- and by

³⁰ See OBRA § 6002(a), amending Section 309 of the Communications Act.

³¹ See 47 U.S.C. § 332(d)(1); *CMRS Second Report and Order*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1420.

³² The Commission's effort to establish new personal communications services (PCS) was initiated in 1989, four years prior to enactment of OBRA, in response to several petitions for rulemaking. During that period we established a formal proceeding to consider PCS issues and adopted major policy decisions that resulted in an allocation to PCS of far more spectrum than is allocated to cellular service. See Notice of Inquiry, GEN Docket No. 90-314, 5 FCC Rcd 3995 (1990); Policy Statement and Order, 6 FCC Rcd 6601 (1991); Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Tentative Decision, 7 FCC Rcd 5676 (1992); Tentative Decision and Memorandum Opinion and Order, 7 FCC Rcd 7794 (1992); Second Report and Order, 8 FCC Rcd 7700 (1993); Memorandum Opinion and Order, 9 FCC Rcd 4957(1994); Third Memorandum Opinion and Order, 9 FCC Rcd 6908 (1994). We also made recommendations and participated, on behalf of the United States Government, in international allocations decision making fora that recognized and permitted the use of such spectrum for PCS and other emerging technologies on a global scale. See Report, GEN Docket No. 89-554, 6 FCC Rcd 3900 (1992). Congress was well aware of such activities, as witnessed by the fact that the Budget Act commanded us to begin granting licenses for such new services no later than May 1994. See OBRA § 6002(d)(2)(B).

³³ See *CMRS Second Report and Order*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1421; see also 47 U.S.C. §§ 309(j)(4)(B), 309(j)(4)(c)(iii); OBRA Conference Report at 483, 492-93.

establishing a stable, predictable regulatory environment that facilitates prudent business planning.³⁴

11. We emphasize the important impact on our decisionmaking of these fundamental elements of the OBRA statutory framework, which have no counterparts in other sections of the Communications Act. They are devoted exclusively to wireless telecommunications services, and to CMRS in particular. Our analysis of "market conditions" in the context of Section 332(c)(3) necessarily is governed by that framework.

12. Section 332(c)(3) must be interpreted in this context; it is an exception to the general prohibition against state regulation. We conclude that Connecticut, or any other state, should not be allowed to continue regulating CMRS overall, or cellular service in particular, merely by demonstrating that the market for cellular service has been less than fully competitive. Such a standard would effectively allow an exception permitting regulation to nullify a general prohibition against it, because it is commonly understood that such conditions have in the past adhered in the cellular marketplace. On numerous occasions since the Commission established the two-carrier cellular market structure in 1982, we have acknowledged that such a structure provided less than optimal competitive opportunities.³⁵ Other Federal agencies have taken similar positions.³⁶ One year prior to adoption of the Budget Act, the General Accounting Office (GAO) -- the investigatory arm of Congress -- examined the industry and reported that "[w]hile GAO found no evidence of anticompetitive or collusive behavior in the course of its work, the two-carrier (duopoly) market system that the FCC created may provide only limited competition in cellular telephone markets."³⁷ It strains credulity to assert that Congress was blind to these conditions in 1993 when it broadly

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *See, e.g.,* Cellular Communications Systems, 86 FCC 2d 469, 474 (1981), *modified on reconsideration*, 89 FCC 2d 58, 71-74 (1982), *modified on further reconsideration*, 90 FCC 2d 571 (1982); Petitions for Rulemaking Concerning Proposed Changes to the Commission's Cellular Resale Policies, 6 FCC Rcd 1719, 1725 & n.67 (1991) (*Cellular Resale Order*).

³⁶ *See* Reply Comments of the United States Department of Justice, CC Docket No. 91-34, filed June 19, 1991, at 4-5 ("[T]here is insufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that the cellular service market is in fact workably competitive. In each service area there is still a duopoly[.]"); Comment of the Staff of the Bureau of Economics of the Federal Trade Commission, CC Docket No. 91-34, filed July 31, 1991, at 7 ("[T]he staff disagrees with the tentative conclusion that cellular service is produced in a competitively structured market."), 10-12.

³⁷ United States General Accounting Office, "Telecommunications: Concerns About Competition in the Cellular Telephone Service Industry," GAO/RCED-92-220 (July 1992) (GAO Report).

prohibited state regulation of CMRS.³⁸ Thus, we reject a reading of the statute that allows continued rate regulation merely on a showing of duopoly conditions, because it is not plausible to conclude that Congress adopted a self-defeating statutory scheme.³⁹

13. It also is worth noting that this Agency's recognition of imperfect cellular market conditions has been matched by our commitment to rectify those conditions as quickly as possible by strengthening and expanding cellular competition rather than by resorting to heavy-handed regulation.⁴⁰ For example, we have attempted to heighten cellular competition at the retail level by prohibiting restrictions on the resale of cellular services, except in narrow circumstances where we determined that restrictions intensify competition between the two licensees in each local market.⁴¹ We also have retooled policies initially tailored to promote competition in the wireline market upon determining that they were unlikely to have that effect in the unique setting of wireless telecommunications.⁴² Most especially, we have chosen to address the structural infirmity of the cellular market by vastly expanding the amount of spectrum available for two-way wireless voice communications and other innovative wireless services and technologies.

14. The framework of our CMRS regulatory policy -- moderate regulation, symmetrical regulation of all services as appropriate, and a preference for curing market imperfections by lowering entry barriers in order to encourage competition rather than by

³⁸ Cf. *Goodyear Atomic Corp. v. Miller*, 486 U.S. 174 (1988) (Court generally presumes Congress is knowledgeable about existing law pertinent to legislation it enacts); *accord Miles v. Apex Marine Corporation*, 489 U.S. 19 (1990); *Cannon v. Univ. of Chicago*, 441 U.S. 677 (1979); *Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway Co. v. United States*, 361 U.S. 173 (1959).

³⁹ Cf. *McNary v. Haitian Refugee Center*, 498 U.S. 479 (1991) (Court generally presumes Congress legislates with knowledge of basic rules of statutory construction).

⁴⁰ See, e.g., GAO Report at 3 (The "FCC is relying on the introduction of advanced personal communications services to bring competition to the cellular telephone marketplace."). The Commission policy of avoiding heavy-handed regulation of the cellular market while it was developing also has been determined reasonable in court. See *Cellnet Communication, Inc. v. FCC*, 965 F.2d 1106, 1112 (D.C. Cir 1992) (petitions for review of FCC order declining to initiate rate regulation of cellular denied because "the FCC could reasonably conclude, in light of the novelty of the service and the speed of technological change, to wait and see how the market evolved...").

⁴¹ See *Cellular Resale Order*, 7 FCC Rcd at 4006-07. We have recently initiated a review of our resale policies to tailor them to conditions in an emerging wireless telecommunications market that has been expanded to include PCS. See *Equal Access and Interconnection Obligations Pertaining to Commercial Mobile Radio Services*, 9 FCC Rcd 5408 (1994) (*Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Notice of Inquiry*), Second Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 95-149, released Apr. 20, 1995.

⁴² *Bundling of Cellular Customer Premises Equipment and Cellular Service*, 7 FCC Rcd 4028 (1992).

regulating existing licensees -- aligns closely with the principal building blocks of OBRA. Indeed, that statute is in a very real sense a validation of our approach.⁴³ As the legislative history of OBRA makes plain, Congress intended those building blocks to establish a *national* regulatory policy for CMRS,⁴⁴ not a policy that is balkanized state-by-state.

15. That intention informs our review of petitions filed by states under Section 332(c)(3). Put simply, Congress intended such petitions to be evaluated in light of a general preference for allowing the policies embodied in OBRA to have an opportunity to work. With regard to the statutory prohibition on state regulation in Section 332(c)(3) in particular, the legislative history leaves no room for doubt on this point by providing that:⁴⁵

[i]n reviewing [state] petitions . . . the Commission also should be mindful of the Committee's desire to give the policies embodie[d] in section 332(c) an adequate opportunity to yield the benefits of increased competition and subscriber choice anticipated by the Committee.

16. In deference to the states, with whom we have and will continue to share telecommunications jurisdiction under the dual regulatory system of the Communications Act, we have not presumed to establish a rigid blueprint for the demonstration required under Section 332(c)(3). Moreover, unlike many opponents of the petition before us, we do not agree that a state's burden is so great that it is impossible to carry. For example, our decision to forbear from most CMRS regulation is not dispositive of the question whether states may initiate or continue rate regulation of such services. We think it unlikely that Congress would have established two separate statutory procedures -- one to govern our forbearance, and another to govern states' petitions⁴⁶ -- if it intended our decisions under the former procedure to control automatically the outcomes under both of them. Instead, we

⁴³ If Congress had concluded our approach was deficient, or that we should travel in a different policy direction, it is reasonable to conclude that it would have directed us accordingly.

⁴⁴ See Conference Report at 480-81, incorporating the findings set forth in the Senate Amendment, including the following:

[B]ecause commercial mobile services require a Federal license and the Federal Government is attempting to promote competition for such services, and because providers of such services do not exercise market power vis-a-vis telephone exchange service carriers and State regulation can be a barrier to the development of competition in this market, uniform national policy is necessary and in the public interest.

⁴⁵ H.R. Rep. No. 103-111, 103d Cong., 1st Sess. at 261-62.

⁴⁶ See 47 U.S.C. §§ 332(c)(1) (forbearance) and 332(c)(3) (state petitions).

conclude that the exemption in Section 332(c)(3) is designed to permit a state to demonstrate that market conditions in that state warrant a departure from national OBRA policies.

17. Such a demonstration begins but does not end with a showing of less than fully competitive market conditions. Almost all markets are imperfectly competitive,⁴⁷ and such conditions can produce good results for consumers.⁴⁸ In particular, as noted previously, Congress was aware of the duopoly cellular structure when it generally proscribed state regulation of CMRS. If a showing of less than perfect competition in the past could justify granting a state petition, regulation might be imposed in a great many circumstances. Nothing on this record convinces us that Congress intended that result.

18. Instead, we believe that a state must establish the existence of an environment of unjust and unreasonable, or unreasonably discriminatory, rates, given the dynamic and evolving structure in which CMRS is provided. When we implemented the Section 332(c)(3) state petition process in the *CMRS Second Report and Order*, we adopted a rule designed to elicit the information needed to make such a showing. Such information permits us to perform a Structure-Conduct-Performance (“SCP”) analysis,⁴⁹ which is a standard paradigm of modern industrial organization analysis.⁵⁰ This paradigm, as applied to the mobile telecommunications industry, holds that market structure is impacted by basic conditions such as the number of licenses issued by the Commission and the state of technology. Conduct, in turn, depends on the structure of the market, *e.g.*, on the number of competitors, the cost structure, and the degree of integration with other wireless providers. Performance, in turn, depends on the conduct of providers and other industry participants with regard to activities such as pricing, inter-firm coordination, and technical standards. Such an analysis permits an evaluation of the degree of rivalry within a particular industry

⁴⁷ In general, perfect competition can exist only where goods are homogeneous, and all buyers and sellers have full information and accept price as given (*i.e.*, they do not try to influence price). There are also certain necessary conditions regarding cost of production. *See* D. Carlton & J. Perloff, *MODERN INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION* 87 (1995). Under perfect competition, price equals marginal cost, which is the incremental cost of producing the last unit of a good. Such conditions are theoretical constructs.

⁴⁸ *See, e.g.*, W. Baumol, J. Panzar & R. Willig, *CONTESTABLE MARKETS AND THE THEORY OF INDUSTRY STRUCTURE* 15-46 (1982).

⁴⁹ Section 20.13(a)(1) requires states to include “demonstrative evidence” establishing failed market conditions. *See* 47 C.F.R. § 20.13(a)(1). Section 20.13(a)(2) provides an extensive, detailed list of the types of information that states are encouraged to supply in order to meet this evidentiary burden. *See* 47 C.F.R. § 20.13(a)(2)(vi).

⁵⁰ *See, e.g.*, F. Scherer & D. Ross, *INDUSTRIAL MARKET STRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE*, 4-7 (3d ed. 1990) (“Scherer and Ross”); D. Carlton & J. Perloff, *MODERN INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION*, chs. 1, 9 (2d ed. 1994); J. Tirole, *THE THEORY OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION* 1-3 (1988).

structure and allows us to determine whether and how consumer interests are being served by such activity.

19. Nothing in our rule governing the state petition process suggests that merely showing the existence of a cellular duopoly structure is enough to support a petition. In the first instance, the rule signals our insistence that a petition must be based on demonstrable evidence of anticompetitive activity, or unjust and unreasonable, or unreasonably discriminatory, rates. For example, in order to determine whether an anticompetitive environment presently exists within a state, we requested that a petitioning state produce “specific allegations of fact,” to be supported by a sworn affidavit of an individual with personal knowledge thereof, regarding “anticompetitive or discriminatory practices or behavior by commercial mobile radio service providers.”⁵¹ We also requested “[e]vidence, information and analysis demonstrating with particularity instances of systematic unjust and unreasonable rates ... [or a] pattern of such rates, that demonstrates the inability of the commercial mobile radio service marketplace in the state to produce reasonable rates through competitive forces,” and we indicated that we would consider such evidence “especially probative.”⁵²

20. In order to assess present market conditions so as to predict the future effectiveness of market forces within the state, we requested information on the number and type of CMRS providers in the state as well as their respective customers,⁵³ and “an assessment of the extent to which services offered by the commercial mobile radio service providers the state proposes to regulate are substitutable for services offered by other carriers in the state.”⁵⁴ We also requested information and complaint statistics revealing customer satisfaction with CMRS providers within the state.⁵⁵ In addition to this information, and as a further aid in projecting CMRS growth rates and other trends within the state, we also requested information on “trends” in each commercial radio provider’s rates and customer base⁵⁶ and on “opportunities for new providers to enter into the provision of competing services” as well as “an analysis of any barriers to such entry.”⁵⁷ In short, although states have the discretion to adduce such evidence in support of continued rate regulation as they

⁵¹ 47 C.F.R. § 20.13(a)(2)(vi).

⁵² 47 C.F.R. § 20.13(a)(2)(vii).

⁵³ 47 C.F.R. § 20.13(a)(2)(i) and (ii).

⁵⁴ 47 C.F.R. § 20.13(a)(2)(iv).

⁵⁵ 47 C.F.R. § 20.13(a)(2)(viii).

⁵⁶ 47 C.F.R. § 20.13(a)(2)(ii) and (iii).

⁵⁷ 47 C.F.R. § 20.13(a)(2)(v).

see fit,⁵⁸ the comprehensive list of anticipated documentation in Section 20.13 gives states guidance concerning the evidence of structure, conduct, and performance that we would find persuasive in evaluating their petitions.

21. The purposes to which such evidence must be put also are straightforward. For example, with regard to industry structure, while a state seeking to regulate two-way mobile voice services may draw attention to the cellular duopoly, it is incumbent on that state to consider factors that have a direct and substantial impact on that structure. In particular, in evaluating a cellular-oriented petition, we will look with disfavor on any petition that fails to consider the immediate and near-term impact of PCS. Given the general statutory purpose of facilitating PCS-type services, it would be difficult to ignore or downplay the importance of fundamental structural changes when considering Section 332(c) petitions.

22. While PCS is not yet available to the public, it is an accepted antitrust principle that a firm may be considered in competitive analysis if it could enter the market in question.⁵⁹ Under the case law potential entry must be reasonably prompt, a typical period being two years from the present in order to expect a significant impact on existing competitors,⁶⁰ and there is little doubt that PCS licensees will enter the market for CMRS in competition with cellular providers within this timeframe. We recently concluded an auction designed to license rapidly two additional competitive providers of wireless two-way voice and data communications in every local market in the country. As shown in the table below, the winning bidders in markets encompassing Connecticut have committed to pay substantial

⁵⁸ *CMRS Second Report and Order*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1504.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., *McCaw Personal Communications, Inc. v. Pacific Telesis Group*, 645 F.Supp. 1166, 1174 (N.D. Cal. 1986) (“the existence of low barriers to entry may rebut a prima facie showing of illegality, even where the combined market shares of the merged firms is quite high”), citing *United States v. Waste Management, Inc.*, 743 F.2d 976, 982- 83 (2d Cir. 1984). See also *American Bar Association*, I ANTITRUST LAW DEVELOPMENTS (THIRD) 307-11 (1992) and cases cited therein.

⁶⁰ See *FTC v. Owens-Illinois, Inc.*, 681 F.Supp. 27, 37 & n.23 (D.D.C. 1988), *vacated on other grounds*, 850 F.2d 694 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (concerning “the extensive present and future intermaterial competition in the glass and other packaging industries,” “[a]n important, but undisputed, assumption of the economic analysis in this case is that the relevant time frame within which to view elasticity is approximately two years. In other words, conversions by purchasers between types of containers must be feasible within this time frame for demand and supply to be considered elastic”); Department of Justice & Federal Trade Commission, *Horizontal Merger Guidelines* (Apr. 2, 1992)(*Merger Guidelines*), reprinted in 4 Trade Reg. Rep. (CCH) ¶ 13,104 (Apr. 7, 1992) at 20,573-10 (Entry Analysis, Timeliness of Entry: “In order to deter or counteract the competitive effects of concern, entrants must quickly achieve a significant impact on price in the relevant market. The Agency generally will consider timely only those committed entry alternatives that can be achieved within two years from initial planning to significant market impact”) (footnote omitted). The *Merger Guidelines* consider firms to be present competitors if, under certain conditions, they could shift production to a new product within only one year. *Id.* at 20,573-4.

sums for the right to operate wireless systems in that state. Having done so, it is reasonable to conclude they will deploy the facilities necessary to become operational as quickly as possible so as to begin recouping their investment.

BROADBAND PCS AUCTION RESULTS

Connecticut					
MTA #	Freq. Blk.	State	Market	Winning Bidder	Winning Bid
M008	A	Maine	Boston-Providence	AT&T Wireless PCS Inc.	\$121,660,000
M008	B	Maine	Boston-Providence	WirelessCo, L.P.	\$127,065,892
M001	A	New York	New York	Omnipoint Corporation	\$347,518,309 ⁶¹
M001	B	New York	New York	WirelessCo, L.P.	\$442,712,000

23. The nature of this impending competitive entry bears emphasis. Unlike the typical "ease of entry" case, where entry by new competitors is hypothetical or may occur only at an industry's margin, PCS activity is undeniably real. It is not something that "may" occur, or that will occur only sporadically. It *is* happening, and it is happening on a nationwide scale. As the recently-completed auction demonstrates, some of this entry is being mounted by large, well-financed entities with long experience and success in the telecommunications business. That field of competitors will be strengthened further upon completion of additional spectrum auctions in the near future. Available evidence indicates that cellular companies, faced with the near-term entry of PCS, have reacted by preparing for impending competition, *i.e.*, by lowering prices and adopting new technologies. For example, there are reports that observable declines in cellular prices are attributable in part to cellular carriers' knowledge that reasonably soon they will face new competition from PCS

⁶¹ This figure represents the amount to be paid by the pioneer's preference licensee, as required by Section 309(j)(13) of the Communications Act. *See* American Personal Communications, Washington-Baltimore MTA #10, Frequency Block A; Cox Cable Communications, Inc., Los-Angeles-San Diego MTA #2, Frequency Block A; Omnipoint Communications, Inc., New York MTA #1, Frequency Block A; For Initial Authorizations in the Broadband Personal Communications Service, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 10 FCC Rcd 1101 (1994).

licensees.⁶² The advent of PCS also appears unambiguously to be having an impact on the present marketplace; it is repeatedly cited as a precipitating factor in major mergers and joint ventures in the wireless industry.⁶³ Thus, the available evidence indicates strongly that such entry is not speculative. Instead, all evidence suggests that it is empirically real and in the very near term will be substantial and pervasive. This warrants our consideration when evaluating a state petition to regulate rates under Section 332(c)(3).

24. Evidence of industry conduct and performance is also relevant. For example, a state might demonstrate specific instances of collusive behavior on the part of licensees. A state also might demonstrate that the statutory purposes of OBRA were not coming to fruition in that state, or were not likely to do so. We would find highly relevant any evidence that demand for CMRS services in general and cellular service in particular is too low to promote market entry by the number of licensees needed to ensure that facilities-based competition will occur at a level adequate to warrant reliance on market forces, rather than rate regulation, as a means of protecting consumer interests.

25. Moreover, a very strong indication that industry conduct and performance are failing to serve consumer interests adequately would be evidence of a lack of investment on the part of licensees in CMRS facilities, or a failure by licensees to deploy adequately new facilities, technologies, and services. Such a showing might support a conclusion that licensees were restricting the output of a service solely to increase its price, and such activity might warrant an appropriate regulatory response. Of course, a successful showing of this nature requires more than evidence that a licensee is earning economic rents (*i.e.*, pricing above cost). It is readily conceivable that economic rents earned in the cellular industry also might advance important public policies, such as if they were applied in furtherance of the statutory goal of promoting investment in the cellular infrastructure. In that event, the rates

⁶² See, e.g., COMM. DAILY, Apr. 24, 1995, "*Cellular Industry Eyes Further Cuts, Adjustments to Challenge PCS*" (report on independent researcher's projection of cellular service rate cuts "up to 40%" over next two years); COMM. DAILY, Telephony Section, Mar. 9, 1995 (NYNEX cellular company "said it will begin offering PCS-type services in metro N.Y. under Geographic Option Plan trademark, giving customers greater flexibility in setting rates and using service. Monthly charge is \$24.99, with additional min. at 29 cents in home county, 99 cents elsewhere"); M. Mills, *Wireless: The Next Generation*, WASH. POST, Feb. 20, 1995, Washington Business Section at 1, 14-15; M. Thyfault, *Bell Companies Get Personal -- Bell Atlantic, NYNEX Plan to Merge Their Mobile and Cellular Divisions as PCS Players Continue Consolidation*, INFORMATIONWEEK, Communications Section at 33, July 18, 1994 (Bell Atlantic announces a low-priced, low-range offering on its Annapolis, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh cellular systems, intended to resemble PCS offerings).

⁶³ See, e.g., Applications of Bell Atlantic Corp. and NYNEX Corp. for Transfer of Cellular Radio Licenses to Cellco Partnership, Report No. CL-95-17, File Nos. 00762-CL-AL-1-95 *et al.*, filed Oct. 18, 1994, Exhibit 2 ("Description of Transaction and Public Interest Statement") at 12, 14; *Id.*, Attachment D, Affidavit of M. Lowenstein at para. 18; Motorola, Inc., Order, DA 95-890, released Apr. 27, 1995, at para. 17 (Wireless Telecommunications Bureau), *petition for reconsideration pending*; Craig O. McCaw, 9 FCC Rcd at 5862-63.

underlying such profits would have been paid by those who ultimately benefit from reinvestment in cellular facilities. Specifically, as a cellular carrier adds large numbers of customers, it must expand capacity so that the quality of service to existing and new customers is not degraded. Thus, an analysis of economic performance must place great weight on reinvestment of profits in this high-growth industry, for, without such reinvestment, consumers might receive less value for their money. In short, the significance of economic rents under our Section 332(c)(3) analysis is found not simply in their existence in the first instance but in their subsequent application.

26. Finally, we note that SCP evidence typically may be segregated into two categories: static factors and dynamic factors.⁶⁴ For example, prices or rates of return in a given year are static factors. Growth and investment are dynamic factors. In addition, a dynamic analysis views price and other static factors at a given point in time in their relationship to static factors such as price in the future.⁶⁵ Thus, a rate of return that looks high today may be fair and reasonable when looked at in terms of its impact on future prices.⁶⁶ Furthermore, static factors are, as the name implies, static, or even temporary, whereas the long-term impact of dynamic factors is more important because their effects are cumulative and more permanent. Thus, we believe that evidence concerning dynamic factors is a more persuasive market indicator than evidence concerning static factors. Given the rapidly changing nature of the market in which wireless services are provided and the statutory purposes of OBRA, we conclude that evidence of where a market is going is more relevant than evidence of where it has been.

27. No single factor, standing alone, necessarily would tip the balance for or against a particular state petition. The statute allows the states flexibility to make their showings in the best manner they see fit, and it is conceivable that we might find a showing based primarily on one factor to be persuasive. Those demonstrations that are tied most closely to the statutory scheme are, of course, the most determinative. Our decisions in this proceeding and similar proceedings are based on the totality of the evidence.

IV. CONNECTICUT PETITION

A. Procedural Issues

28. The pleadings present two threshold procedural matters that we must address before addressing the Connecticut DPUC's petition on its merits. First, some parties argue that the petition should not be granted because it requests regulatory authority only

⁶⁴ See, e.g., J. Tirole, *THE THEORY OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION* 209-70 (1988).

⁶⁵ *Id.* at 239-70.

⁶⁶ In particular, consumers may be better off facing somewhat higher prices today in exchange for high levels of investment by existing competitors.

over cellular service rather than all CMRS services, thereby violating what these opponents claim is the fundamental OBRA goal of achieving symmetrical regulatory treatment of CMRS. Second, Bell Atlantic has filed an application for review of the Bureau's determination to include the record of the Connecticut state proceeding in this Docket, subject in part to confidentiality procedures.

1. Cellular-Only Regulation

a. Pleadings of the Parties

29. Various parties argue that: (1) Congress revised Sec. 332 to establish regulatory parity, remedy the disparate regulatory treatment of similar forms of CMRS and create a uniform, nationwide regulatory regime; (2) by seeking to impose regulation only on cellular services, the Connecticut DPUC would impose inconsistent regulations on different CMRS providers, thereby creating precisely the asymmetrical regulatory conditions Congress sought to remedy; accordingly (3) the DPUC's petition must be rejected because it seeks to impose a type of regulatory regime expressly rejected by Congress.⁶⁷

30. The Connecticut DPUC and its supporters dispute these arguments. While they acknowledge that regulatory parity is a goal of the OBRA, these parties argue that Congress expressly recognized that differential regulatory treatment of CMRS providers is permissible under the Act.⁶⁸ Many parties claim as well that there is no evidence in this record or elsewhere that non-cellular CMRS providers currently possess market power, thus making regulation of their activities inappropriate.⁶⁹

b. Discussion

31. We have determined in other proceedings that while regulatory parity is an important policy that can yield important pro-competitive and pro-consumer benefits when appropriately applied, parity for its own sake is not required by any provision of the Communications Act.⁷⁰ Indeed, the amended Act allows us to adopt a flexible regulatory

⁶⁷ See e.g., AMTA Comments at 6, BAMM Comments at 6-7, CTIA Comments at 7-9, GTE Reply Comments at 3-6, McCaw Comments 7-11, Springwch Comments at 24-25.

⁶⁸ E.g., OCC Reply Comments at 23; Nextel Reply Comments at 3-5.

⁶⁹ E.g., AMTA Comments at 6; E.F. Johnson Comments at 4-5, MTel Reply Comments at 4-5.

⁷⁰ See Implementation of Sections 3(n) and 332 of the Communications Act, Regulatory Treatment of Mobile Services, Third Report and Order, 9 FCC Rcd 7988 (1994) (*CMRS Third Report and Order*); Applications of Craig O. McCaw, Transferor, and American Telephone and Telegraph Company, Transferee, File No. ENF 93-44, 9 FCC Rcd 5836 (1994).

scheme that treats certain CMRS in a streamlined fashion.⁷¹ Congress recognized that market conditions might warrant differential regulatory treatment of CMRS, and explicitly granted us the authority to forbear from applying certain provisions of the Act.⁷² That Congress understood such forbearance might be exercised selectively is not in doubt. As the OBRA Conference Report (at 491) states in explaining our forbearance authority:

The purpose of this provision is to recognize that market conditions may justify differences in the regulatory treatment of some providers of commercial mobile services. While this provision does not alter the treatment of all commercial mobile services as common carriers, this provision permits the Commission some degree of flexibility to determine which specific regulations should be applied to each carrier.⁷³

32. Nothing in the record of this proceeding, or elsewhere to our knowledge, demonstrates that Congress intended to deny states similar flexibility with regard to the exercise of their CMRS regulatory authority. Thus, we are not persuaded by arguments that the Connecticut DPUC's request to regulate only cellular services is incongruent with regulatory parity concepts embedded in the OBRA.

2. Confidentiality

33. In the *First Confidentiality Order*, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (Bureau) noted that, while Connecticut twice submitted supporting materials accompanied by requests for confidential treatment, these requests failed to comply with our procedural rules.⁷⁴ BMM and Springwich separately filed rate of return materials accompanied by requests for confidential treatment; these materials previously had been subject to limited disclosure pursuant to a protective order in the Connecticut proceeding.⁷⁵ The Bureau adopted in this proceeding the same protective order as Connecticut applied in its own investigation.

⁷¹ See *CMRS Second Report and Order*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1463.

⁷² Section 332(c)(1)(A) provides that the Commission may determine that any provision of Title II, other than Sections 201, 202 or 208 may be specified as "inapplicable to [any] service or person" otherwise treated as a common carrier. 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(1)(A).

⁷³ The Conference Report further provides that "[d]ifferential regulation of providers of commercial mobile services is permissible but is not required in order to fulfill the intent of this section." *Id.*

⁷⁴ See *Petition of Public Utilities Commission, state of Hawaii, et al.*, PR Docket Nos. 94-103, 94-105, 94-106, 94-108, DA 95-111, Jan. 25, 1995 at paras. 5-9 (*First Confidentiality Order*).

⁷⁵ *Id.*

34. In the *Second Confidentiality Order*, the Bureau considered Connecticut's third request for confidential treatment of supporting materials and granted that request as well as Connecticut's motion to accept the materials for filing.⁷⁶ These materials, confidential and public, were developed in the state's independent investigation of market conditions in Connecticut. The decision in that proceeding originally was submitted as an attachment to the DPUC petition.⁷⁷ The Bureau granted the confidentiality request only in part, however, under discretion provided by Section 0.459(f) of the Commission's Rules. The Bureau treated as confidential certain materials,⁷⁸ and denied confidential treatment to other materials, because the DPUC filing did not identify which of these materials were allegedly deserving of confidential treatment, nor describe reasons for their confidential treatment.⁷⁹

35. Subsequently, BAMM and the Resellers filed applications for review of the *Second Confidentiality Order*. On its own motion, the Bureau reconsidered its decision to exclude from the record certain of the Connecticut materials, which resolved the Resellers' application.⁸⁰ BAMM, however, also contends that the Bureau violated unspecified Commission Rules by granting Connecticut's motion, and also violated Section 20.13 (a)(5) of our Rules by accepting a substantial pleading several months after the filing deadline specified in that rule.⁸¹

36. The Bureau granted Connecticut's motion for leave to accept the materials submitted because those materials are germane to the demonstration the state is required to make to support its petition.⁸² The material submitted by Connecticut with this motion already was part of the state's proceeding. Excluding such materials effectively would have denied Connecticut the opportunity to make the demonstration required by the amended statute. BAMM acknowledges that Commission Staff advised it to await review of the

⁷⁶ See Petition of Public Utilities Commission, State of Hawaii, *et al.*, PR Docket Nos. 94-103, 94-105, 94-106, 94-108, DA 95-208 Feb. 9, 1995 at para. 3 (*Second Confidentiality Order*).

⁷⁷ See DPUC Petition at Attachment (Decision of the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control's Investigation into the Connecticut Cellular Service Market and Status of Competition, DPUC Docket No. 94-03-27, Aug. 8, 1994 (*Connecticut Decision*)).

⁷⁸ Listed in Section 2 of Appendix A of the *Second Confidentiality Order*.

⁷⁹ Listed in Section 3 of Appendix A of the *Second Confidentiality Order*.

⁸⁰ Petition of the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control, PR Docket No. 94-106, DA 95-348, Feb. 24, 1995 at para. 3 (*Reconsideration of Second Confidentiality Order*).

⁸¹ BAMM's Application for Review at 2-5.

⁸² See *Second Confidentiality Order*, paras. 7-11.

proffered state materials, and the corrective confidentiality order on reconsideration.⁸³ At that time, BMM was afforded an opportunity to file supplemental comments on these materials and it has done so.⁸⁴ BMM was a participant in the DPUC state proceedings, as are other parties to this docket; the Bureau's late acceptance of materials with which BMM already was familiar imposes no hardship on BMM given the opportunity for supplemental comments. The state proceedings, initiated with a view to filing an OBRA petition, are uniquely germane to the state's assertion of its residual rights under the amended Act. In these circumstances BMM has not been harmed by the acceptance of the materials submitted. Further, any error committed as a result of the Bureau's failure to explicitly waive Section 20.13 when granting Connecticut's motion was harmless. BMM's application for review accordingly is denied.

37. The excluded materials were entered into the record and given limited disclosure only to outside counsel and outside experts for parties to this proceeding, pursuant to the protective order adopted in the *First Confidentiality Order*.⁸⁵ The analysis of the Connecticut petition reflects consideration of supplemental comments and replies, based on these materials, submitted on March 10 and March 17, 1995.⁸⁶

B. Summary of Request

38. Pursuant to its regulatory authority under state law, the Connecticut DPUC conducted a proceeding to examine cellular market conditions, including consumer protection issues.⁸⁷ The DPUC held seven days of hearings on this matter.⁸⁸ Connecticut states that the evidence offered in DPUC Docket No. 94-03-27 "indicates" that current market conditions sustain anti-competitive and discriminatory practices on the part of wholesale cellular providers.⁸⁹ Principally on this basis, Connecticut asserts that since current market conditions do not effectuate "true competition," it should retain jurisdiction over wholesale cellular providers.⁹⁰ Evidence of discriminatory and anti-competitive conduct on the part of the wholesale cellular carriers and their retail arms, Connecticut asserts, includes (1) market

⁸³ See BMM's Application for review at n. 2.

⁸⁴ *Reconsideration of Second Confidentiality Order* at 3.

⁸⁵ That protective Order is appended to the *First Confidentiality Order* as Appendix B.

⁸⁶ Parties filing pleadings based on confidential materials are listed in Appendix A.

⁸⁷ DPUC Petition at 1.

⁸⁸ *Id.*

⁸⁹ DPUC Petition at 2.

⁹⁰ DPUC Petition at 1-2.

tampering, (2) price fixing, (3) upside-down pricing (setting wholesale prices for resellers above the underlying carrier's retail price), and (4) unfair billing practices; as well as conduct arising directly from the wholesale carriers' relationship to their affiliated retail operations, specifically, (5) the use of information acquired from independent resellers by the wholesale carrier for the benefit of its resale affiliate, and (6) preferential pricing and practices designed to benefit the resale affiliate.

39. The DPUC also looked at the wholesale carriers' rates of return, market shares, and price levels. As to rates of return and overall service rates of the wholesale cellular providers, Connecticut states that while the record in the state proceeding shows that the cellular carriers have offered several promotions since 1987, there is no indication that these promotions have had any impact on the Connecticut market and its cellular end-users.⁹¹ The DPUC states that it has determined that the greatest benefit from these promotions has been to the underlying carriers' own retail affiliates, because of the volume discount structure of the wholesale tariff.⁹²

40. The DPUC's findings of fact in the state proceeding do not include any conclusions on the allegations of anti-competitive and discriminatory practices. The DPUC also stated as a finding of fact that the record of Docket No. 94-03-27 is inconclusive regarding the reasonableness of cellular carriers' rates of return and their financial performance since 1987.⁹³ In its reply comments, however, the DPUC states that:⁹⁴

the level of competition in Connecticut is not effective and that the DPUC should continue to regulate the wholesale cellular providers until they can satisfactorily demonstrate that other CMRS are effectively operating in their service territories and true competition is present in the marketplace.

41. The DPUC states that it intends to initiate a separate proceeding to examine this situation further. The purpose of the DPUC's contemplated further review is to ensure that there is a proper mix of management between the cellular carriers' wholesale and retail affiliates, and a proper relationship between the wholesaler and independent resellers.⁹⁵ In addition, the DPUC states that it intends to fully investigate the rates of return and rate structures of the wholesale providers and to investigate the relationship between the cellular

⁹¹ *Id.*

⁹² *Id.*

⁹³ *See Connecticut Decision* at 30.

⁹⁴ DPUC Reply Comments at 2; *see also Connecticut Decision* at 31.

⁹⁵ DPUC Petition at 3-4.

carriers' costs and their service rates to ensure that customers receive fair, equitable and just rates.⁹⁶

42. The DPUC acknowledges that new service providers (PCS, SMRs, and wide area SMRs) will provide acceptable alternatives to cellular service in the future, but it believes that these are not practical substitutes for cellular services at this time.⁹⁷ Connecticut also states that it appears that the highly concentrated nature of the Connecticut CMRS marketplace will not change significantly before the year 2003.⁹⁸

C. Regulation for Which Continued Authority Is Sought

43. At present, Connecticut regulates its wholesale cellular providers under Section 16-250b of the Connecticut General Statutes. Under this regulatory scheme, the DPUC requires that all wholesale cellular tariff filings be cost-justified.⁹⁹ The DPUC monitors market conditions by requiring each carrier to keep complete records concerning carrier's rates and charges, services, and the conduct of operations.¹⁰⁰ The DPUC also requires each carrier to file quarterly financial reports.¹⁰¹ These rules have been in effect since January 29, 1986. These regulations provide the DPUC with the standards and procedures for regulation of the wholesale cellular carriers' rates and charges, services, accounting practices, and safety and conduct of their operations.¹⁰² In addition, the DPUC has adopted a shortened, five-day notice provision for tariff revisions affecting banded rates.¹⁰³ Connecticut seeks to retain regulatory control of the rates of wholesale cellular providers until it concludes a further review of conditions in the Connecticut wholesale cellular market. After the review, which is projected to conclude July 1, 1996, if the DPUC determines that the market is not truly competitive, Connecticut seeks to retain jurisdiction for an additional year, until October 1, 1997.

⁹⁶ *Id.* at 4.

⁹⁷ *Id.*

⁹⁸ *Id.*

⁹⁹ DPUC Petition at Appendix G.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ *Id.*

¹⁰² DPUC Petition at 5; *see also* App. G (regulations).

¹⁰³ DPUC Petition at 5, *see also Connecticut Decision* at 30-31 (Finding of Fact 9). The previous notice provision required a thirty-day lag before proposed revisions could take effect.

D. Description of the Connecticut State Market

44. The subject wholesale cellular providers are Springwich Cellular Limited Partnership (Springwich), Bell Atlantic Metro Mobile Companies (Bell Atlantic), and Litchfield County Cellular, Inc. (Litchfield). Springwich and Bell Atlantic provide wholesale cellular service in Connecticut's four New England County Metropolitan Areas (Hartford, New Haven, Fairfield, and New London) and the Windham Rural Service Area (RSA). Springwich and Litchfield provide wholesale cellular service in the Litchfield RSA. Springwich currently has 15 reseller subscribers, while Bell Atlantic has 11 reseller subscribers. Litchfield has no reseller subscribers.¹⁰⁴

V. CASE ON THE MERITS

A. General Positions of the Parties

45. NCRA, Nextel,¹⁰⁵ CTCS, the Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel, and the Attorney General of Connecticut strongly support the Connecticut DPUC's Petition to retain regulatory control of the rates of wholesale cellular carriers. AMTA, MTel, Pagemart, E.F. Johnson, PageNet, and PCIA are also supportive of the Petition, to the extent that it does not seek to extend rate regulation to paging services or other commercial mobile services.

46. BMM, CTIA, GTE, McCaw, Springwich, and RCA oppose the Petition. PageNet and Pagemart oppose the Petition only with respect to paging services, arguing that the DPUC failed to sustain its burden of proof with respect to those services.¹⁰⁶

47. In support of the DPUC's petition, the Attorney General argues that the Connecticut duopoly cellular market is not competitive.¹⁰⁷ Other commenters in support include NCRA and Nextel. They argue that facilities-based cellular providers have a "transmission bottleneck" that enables them to limit competition and "exact supracompetitive profits from the public."¹⁰⁸ NCRA has listed in an Appendix to its

¹⁰⁴ DPUC Petition at 2.

¹⁰⁵ Nextel, however, opposes state rate regulation of "emerging non-dominant CMRS carriers, including ESMR and PCS providers." Nextel Comments at 12.

¹⁰⁶ Pagemart Reply Comments at 3-4; PageNet Reply Comments at 3.

¹⁰⁷ AG Comments at 3-4.

¹⁰⁸ Nextel Comments at 13, *citing* California Petition at 25 ("access to radio spectrum and switching facilities are deemed bottleneck facilities in the cellular market and that the facilities-based carriers' control of these bottleneck functions is the primary cause of resellers' diminished

comments the reports of eight Federal agencies, which it alleges have concluded that the cellular industry is not competitive.¹⁰⁹ Nextel also argues that the duopolist character of the cellular industry compels us to grant Connecticut's Petition.¹¹⁰

48. On the issue of substitutability and consequent competition from other types of commercial mobile services, Nextel contends that presently there are no "voice-grade" mobile services offering viable competition to cellular service. Nextel asserts that "[u]ntil effective competition develops, continued rate regulation may be necessary in some states to restrain the dominant market power of cellular duopolists."¹¹¹

49. Those opposing the DPUC Petition point to various factors showing that the cellular market in Connecticut is sufficiently competitive to protect consumers adequately from unreasonable rates. BMM states that evidence obtained in Docket No. 94-03-27 showed declining prices, high rates of subscriber growth, expanding service coverage, introduction of numerous new services, and intense competition between BMM and Springwichee over the past five years.¹¹² With respect to the Federal reports Connecticut relied on, BMM particularly contends that NCRA's reliance upon the DOJ's reports is misplaced because "[n]one of the reports bear any relationship to whether CMRS rate regulation is necessary to protect consumers in Connecticut."¹¹³

50. Springwichee states that subscribership in Connecticut for all commercial mobile services and for cellular services is predicted to continue to expand with the proliferation of new retail rate plans, the continued decline in wholesale prices, and the entry of new CMRS providers.¹¹⁴ Springwichee's year-end estimates for 1993 indicate 86,052 active

contributions in the cellular marketplace"); NCRA Comments at 3.

¹⁰⁹ The list includes the *CMRS Second Report and Order*; Memorandum of the United States in Response to Bell Companies' Motions for Generic Wireless Waivers, Department of Justice, Civ. Action No. 82-0192, July 25, 1994; and Memorandum of the United States in Opposition to AT&T's Motion for a Waiver of Section 1(D) of the Decree in Connection with its Acquisition of McCaw, Department of Justice, Feb. 14, 1994.

¹¹⁰ Nextel Comments at 9-10.

¹¹¹ *Id.* at 10, citing, in support, *Second CMRS Report and Order*, 9 FCC Rcd at 1470.

¹¹² BMM Comments at 12.

¹¹³ BMM Reply Comments at 7, n. 11.

¹¹⁴ Springwichee Comments at 13.

cellular numbers, while BMM reported 101,139 active cellular numbers for the same period.¹¹⁵ Springwiche adds that:

The wholesale cellular carriers in Connecticut have made substantial network investment in response to...competition. Each of the carriers has made significant investments to expand network coverage through deployment of additional cell sites. Since it received a cellular license in 1985, Springwiche has invested in its cellular network by expanding network coverage and facilities and thereby providing additional service value to be passed on by all cellular resellers to their cellular end users.¹¹⁶

51. Other commenters, opposing the Petition, also point to the growth rate for cellular as indicative of a competitive market. CTIA alleges that cellular subscribership is growing domestically at an annual rate of more than 40 percent and that only 16.7 percent of the national market has been tapped.¹¹⁷ CTIA contends that this growth potential, in combination with high intra-industry and inter-industry "churn" rates and rapid technological development, evidences a dynamic and highly competitive cellular market.¹¹⁸ Several commenters remark that this already-competitive market will become more competitive with the advent of PCS, SMRs, and wide area SMRs, and assert that these impending changes affect today's market and must be taken into account when evaluating its present capacity to protect consumers.¹¹⁹

B. Elements of the DPUC Case

1. Anticompetitive and Discriminatory Practices

a. Bulk Volume Discounts and Upside-Down Pricing

52. The Connecticut DPUC, as well as the State Attorney General and the Office of Consumer Counsel, allege that carriers' volume discounts favor their retail affiliates in two respects. First, their lowest wholesale price offerings require such a high volume that

¹¹⁵ *Id.*

¹¹⁶ *Id.* at 14.

¹¹⁷ CTIA Comments at 17.

¹¹⁸ CTIA explains that "churn" rates reflect customer switching, among cellular providers in the case of "intra-industry" churn, or to other mobile services in the case of "inter-industry" churn. CTIA contends that the inter-industry churn rate approaches 16 percent. *Id.* at 14-15 and 23.

¹¹⁹ *See, e.g.*, GTE Reply Comments at 11, CTIA Reply Comments at 5, and Springwiche Comments at 15.