

Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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In the Matter of )  
 )  
Truth-in-Billing )  
and )  
Billing Format )  
 )  
 )

CC Docket No. 98-170  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

**SHERWOOD MUTUAL TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION, INC.'S  
PETITION FOR TEMPORARY WAIVER**

For the reasons set forth herein, Sherwood Mutual Telephone Association, Inc. (the "Company") respectfully requests that the Commission grant it a waiver of certain of the rules established in CC Docket No. 98-170. Specifically, the Company requests a waiver of the requirement that it separate all charges by service provider and that it provide a toll-free contact number for each alternative service provider. The Company further requests that this waiver extend through April 1, 2000.

1. On May 11, 1999, the Commission released *Truth-in-Billing and Billing Format*, First Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making, CC Docket No. 98-170 (the "Order"). In the Order, the Commission adopted principals and guidelines for telephone bills to provide consumers with information necessary to make informed decisions with respect to telecommunications services.

2. Errata to the Order were released on May 24, 1999 and on May 28, 1999. The effective date of the truth-in-billing rules is November 12, 1998 according to Federal Register Volume 64, Number 196, published Tuesday, October 12, 1999.

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3. The Company is a small local exchange carrier serving approximately 1,222 access lines in the Sherwood Mutual exchange located in the State of Ohio.

4. Among the requirements set forth in the Order is that where charges for two or more carriers appear on the same telephone bill, the charges must be separated by service provider and that a toll-free contact number or numbers be provided by which customers may inquire or dispute any charge on the bill. The Company was recently informed by its billing vendor, Communications Data Group ("CDG"), that CDG is capable of meeting nearly all of the requirements, but it is not currently capable of providing separation of all charges by service provider nor is it capable of providing a toll-free number for each service provider. CDG has indicated that, although it is working diligently to make the necessary changes to its system, it will not have completed the changes by November 12, 1999. CDG must modify its software platform, which is a costly and time consuming process. Despite its best efforts, CDG will not be able to complete these changes until some time during the first quarter of 2000.

5. The Commission has previously recognized the technical and economic burden on small LECs in purchasing software and equipment upgrades. In its December 10, 1995 Caller ID Order, the Commission issued a stay of its per call blocking and unblocking requirements in response to waiver petitions from several LECs that claimed that providing blocking and unblocking was technically and economically infeasible.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, delaying the Company's compliance with the November 12, 1999 truth-in-billing format deadline will not harm its customers. The customers will still benefit from the new format, but according to a time table that is technically and

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<sup>1</sup> *Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, 10 FCC Rcd 13796, 13808 (1995).

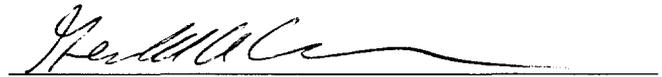
economically feasible for the Company and other similarly situated companies. Therefore, the Company maintains that grant of a waiver of the November 12, 1999 deadline in this instance will benefit the public interest.

6. Accordingly, the Company respectfully requests a waiver of the requirement that charges must be separated by service provider. To the extent that it would require the Company to provide a toll-free number for each service provider, the Company further requests a waiver of the requirement that it provide a toll-free contact number or numbers by which customers may inquire or dispute any charge on the bill. The Company further requests that the waiver extend through April 1, 2000.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Sherwood Mutual Telephone Association, Inc. respectfully requests that the Commission grant this petition.

Respectfully submitted,

SHERWOOD MUTUAL TELEPHONE ASSN., INC.



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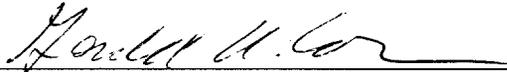
**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

This is to certify that a copy of the foregoing Sherwood Mutual Telephone Association, Inc.'s Petition for Temporary Waiver has been served by regular U.S. mail this 12 day of November, 1999 to the following:

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