

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

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
2000 Biennial Regulatory Review of	)	CC Docket No. 99-216
Part 68 of the Commission's Rules	)	
and Regulations	)	

**COMMENTS OF GTE SERVICE CORPORATION**

Dated: June 23, 2000

GTE Service Corporation and its affiliated domestic telephone operating, wireless and long distance companies

Thomas R. Parker  
GTE Service Corporation  
600 Hidden Ridge, HQE03J27  
P.O. Box 152092  
Irving, TX 75015-2092  
(972) 718-6361

Andre J. Lachance  
GTE Service Corporation  
1850 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 463-5276

Their Attorneys

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## SUMMARY

GTE strongly supports maintaining technical criteria for customer premises equipment (“CPE”). Such criteria are essential to protecting the publicswitched telephone network (“PSTN”) from harm. However, GTE supports privatizing the establishment and maintenance of technical criteria for CPE. Privatization will speed the development of technical criteria and place the responsibility for establishing technical criteria with the industry that benefits from protecting the PSTN.

GTE supports privatization option A, the gatekeeper standards development organization (“SDO”). The gatekeeper SDO option will provide for continued technical criteria to protect the PSTN, will result in one set of standards, will promote effective participation in the standards-setting process by all segments of the industry, and will be neutral and maintain a balance among the participants.

With regards to equipment approval, GTE supports using telecommunications certification bodies (“TCBs”). TCBs are independent of manufacturers and are obligated to ensure that the products they certify meet the technical criteria established by the SDO to protect the PSTN.

The Commission should retain the ultimate responsibility to enforce compliance of the technical criteria established by the SDO. It is essential that those charged with protecting the PSTN from harm are authorized by the Commission to disconnect harmful, noncompliant CPE from the PSTN.

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**COMMENTS OF GTE SERVICE CORPORATION**

GTE Service Corporation and its below-listed affiliates<sup>1</sup> (collectively, "GTE") respectfully submit their comments concerning the 2000 Biennial Regulatory Review of Part 68 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations. In response to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("NPRM"), GTE concurs with the Commission that it is necessary to maintain technical criteria for customer premises equipment ("CPE") to protect the public switched telephone network ("PSTN") from harm. GTE supports privatizing the process of developing equipment standards and believes that the gatekeeper standards development organization ("SDO") proposal is the best means of establishing and maintaining technical criteria for CPE.

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<sup>1</sup> GTE Alaska Incorporated, GTE Arkansas Incorporated, GTE California Incorporated, GTE Florida Incorporated, GTE Hawaiian Telephone Company Incorporated, The Micronesian Telecommunications Corporation, GTE Midwest Incorporated, GTE North Incorporated, GTE Northwest Incorporated, GTE South Incorporated, GTE Southwest Incorporated, Contel of Minnesota, Inc., GTE West Coast Incorporated, Contel of the South, Inc., GTE Communications Corporation, and GTE Wireless Incorporated.

## **I. THE PSTN MUST BE PROTECTED FROM HARM.**

In the NPRM, the Commission asks whether technical criteria are still required to protect the PSTN from harm.<sup>2</sup> In GTE's view, the answer is a resounding "yes." All components of the telecommunications and CPE industries depend upon the safety of the telephone network for economic survival. Technical criteria must be set and rigorously enforced to avoid degradation of service. New services, new vendors, and new technologies increase the danger of introducing harmful interference to the PSTN.

## **II. PRIVATIZATION OF PART 68 IS A POSITIVE STEP.**

The Commission seeks comment on whether it should privatize the establishment of technical standards.<sup>3</sup> Technical criteria established by an industry standards-setting process is a positive step to establishing and maintaining the technical criteria necessary to protect the PSTN from harmful interference. GTE supports privatization because it will result in faster and more technically responsive processes while preventing harm to the PSTN and ensuring access for persons with disabilities. All components of the CPE industry depend upon the safety of the telephone network for economic survival; therefore, the industry should have the responsibility of establishing the criteria. Participation by all segments of the industry will promote parity among the parties through balanced representation, due process, rules, and criteria.

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<sup>2</sup> NPRM at 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 9-11.

### **III. THE COMMISSION SHOULD ADOPT OPTION A – “GATEKEEPER” SDO.**

The Commission proposes three options for privatizing the Part 68 technical standards.<sup>4</sup> Of these options, GTE believes that privatizing Part 68 is best accomplished through the selection of a single “gatekeeper” SDO. A single SDO results in one set of standards, thereby eliminating the possibility of competing sets of standards and standards shopping by manufacturers. A single SDO promotes effective participation by all segments of the industry as they will be participating in one standards-setting organization rather than multiple standards-setting organizations. One standards-setting organization allows focus by the industry segments rather than fragmentation.

### **IV. THE COMMISSION SHOULD ESTABLISH CRITERIA FOR THE SDO’S OPERATION.**

The Commission seeks comment on the guidelines that would govern SDO operations.<sup>5</sup> GTE believes that the SDO should be chosen by the Commission and be subject to Commission oversight with scheduled reviews every three years. The SDO must demonstrate neutrality and a desire to maintain a balanced representation among all applicable industry segments. In this regard, GTE notes that in the past, the Commission provided weighting factors for the local exchange carriers as local exchange carriers are outnumbered by vendors. Maintaining a proper balance will reduce the amount of Commission activity as overseer and enforcer. In demonstrating

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 14-23.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 18-19.

neutrality, the SDO must ensure an openness for comments and provide, without extensive cost, a forum for those who wish to participate.

The SDO must maintain the explicit goals of Part 68. The SDO must follow, and be capable of following, any Commission rules and guidelines for SDO operations. The SDO must be ANSI-accredited, must be professionally and administratively prepared to take responsibility for administration of technical criteria, and must be experienced with technical criteria development.

The SDO must maintain a database of all CPE equipment approved. Form 730 is currently used by the Telecommunications Certification Bodies ("TCBs") to submit information to the Commission on approved equipment. This procedure could be continued and expanded to develop and maintain a database. A database of all CPE equipment approved will ensure that all affected entities have up-to-date information about compliant CPE. This knowledge will help avoid disputes over use of non-compliant equipment.

**V. GTE AGREES WITH PART 68 DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY.**

GTE supports the present Part 68 definitions of demarcation point, single-unit installation, multiunit installations, essential telephones, harm, hearing aid compatible, Private Radio Services, Public Mobile Services, and secure telephones. GTE also supports the changing of the term "telephone company" to "local exchange carrier" throughout Part 68.

## **VI. GTE SUPPORTS RELYING ON TCBS FOR EQUIPMENT APPROVAL.**

In the NPRM, the Commission seeks comment on three different methods for approving equipment under the Part 68 technical standards.<sup>6</sup> Of the proposed methods, GTE supports option 1 – requiring equipment approval from TCBS before a piece of equipment can be introduced into the network. GTE supports the use of TCBS because, unlike manufacturers of equipment who have an incentive to approve their own equipment, TCBS are independent of the manufacturers. TCBS are therefore more likely to ensure that the products that are certified by them comply with established technical criteria.

In addition, GTE supports using TCBS for equipment approval because TCBS are a tried and tested method of performing equipment approval. Thus, TCBS such as Intertek Testing Services, NA Inc. already exist in the industry and are accredited by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (“NIST”).

## **VII. PART 68 AND PART 15 LABELING SHOULD REMAIN SEPARATE.**

The Commission seeks comment on whether Part 15 labeling requirements should be used for Part 68 equipment.<sup>7</sup> GTE believes that equipment labeling is important and should be maintained. However, GTE is opposed to harmonizing the Part 68 and Part 15 labeling. Equipment can be Part 15 registered but not Part 68 registered. Moreover, the Part 68 labeling includes information that is valuable to

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 23-28.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 29-30.

network engineers. Therefore, Part 68 labeling should remain separate and be administered by the SDO.

Part 68 labeling is used for immediate and specific identification of equipment. A customer can look at the back of CPE equipment and determine by the labeling if it is Part 68 registered. This identification assists with trouble shooting procedures. The equipment is readily identifiable as "Complies with Part 68." This is the first step in identifying potential network harm equipment. The present Part 68 label identifies the REN (ringer equivalence number) which is another useful tool for trouble shooting. Switches will only support a certain REN load. Being able to add up RENs associated with the devices on a line can reduce trouble isolation time. In addition, the current Part 68 equipment identification codes help determine any special signaling requirements. For these reasons, GTE urges the Commission to maintain the separate Part 68 labeling requirements.

#### **VIII. THE ENFORCEMENT MECHANISM FOR PART 68 MUST BE MAINTAINED.**

The Commission proposes to maintain the current enforcement mechanisms for the Part 68 rules.<sup>8</sup> GTE agrees that the FCC should retain the ultimate responsibility to enforce compliance with Part 68, including review and enforcement through a *de novo* review process. In addition, GTE supports retaining the current Part 68 complaint procedures.

GTE also supports retaining Section 68.108 of the Commission's rules, which permits carriers to discontinue service to subscribers that connect harmful equipment to

the network. It is essential that those charged with protecting the PSTN from harm are authorized by the Commission to disconnect harmful, noncompliant CPE from the PSTN. The Commission should also continue to maintain the Part 68 HAC/VC rules, registration, and complaint procedures.

**IX. CONCLUSION**

As stated herein, GTE supports maintaining technical criteria for CPE to protect the PSTN from harm. GTE supports the gatekeeper SDO as the best choice for privatization and the use of TCBs as the best method for approving equipment under the technical standards. Finally, GTE supports the Commission's proposal to retain the ultimate responsibility to enforce compliance with Part 68.

Dated: June 23, 2000

Respectfully submitted,

GTE Service Corporation and its affiliated  
domestic telephone operating, wireless and  
long distance companies

Thomas R. Parker  
GTE Service Corporation  
600 Hidden Ridge, HQE03J27  
P.O. Box 152092  
Irving, TX 75015-2092  
(972) 718-6361

By \_\_\_\_\_

Andre J. Lachance  
GTE Service Corporation  
1850 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 463-5276

Their Attorneys

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<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 31-33.