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

OCT 2 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of)
)
Numbering Resource Optimization) CC Docket No. 99-200
)

**REPLY COMMENTS OF WORLDCOM, INC.
ON THOUSANDS-BLOCK POOLING ADMINISTRATOR
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

WorldCom, Inc. ("WorldCom") strongly supports the revised Pooling Administrator ("PA") Requirements Document that was forwarded to the Commission by the North American Numbering Council on July 20, 2000. In these reply comments, WorldCom addresses a series of issues raised by other parties in initial comments.

Compliance with INC guidelines. Several parties address the interaction between the national PA, state PAs, the pooling guidelines established under the Industry Numbering Committee ("INC"), and state commissions. WorldCom agrees with the state commissions of Maine, New Hampshire, and California that the Requirements Document should make clear that the PA will adhere to INC guidelines – except where those guidelines are modified or overridden by a regulator with authority to do so.¹ But it is worth noting that only in very limited circumstances has the Commission given states authority to override INC guidelines. For example, in the *NRO Order*, the Commission specifically authorized states to direct the North American Numbering Plan Administrator ("NANPA") or a PA to reclaim unused or unactivated resources without

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adhering to the reclamation procedures set forth in CO Code Assignment Guidelines.² In general, the national PA will operate under rules of national applicability, not subject to state-by-state variation. The state commissions should not be given additional authority to modify or override INC guidelines.

BellSouth recommends that once the Requirements Document should clearly state that once the transition to national pooling begins, state PAs are expected to comply with national guidelines for pooling.³ In fact, with extremely limited exceptions, state PAs were required to adhere to the national framework for pooling as of September 1, 2000.⁴ While it may be helpful to reference this requirement, it does not appear to be a “technical requirement” for national pooling administration.

Transitioning existing pooling trials and the national pooling rollout. Cox Communications, Inc. (“Cox”) argues that places where pooling was previously implemented should not be included in the 3 NPAs per quarter per NPAC region schedule, and that those trials should be transitioned simultaneously.⁵ While this makes sense intuitively, it is not clear that it would be neutral for all potential bidders. For example, since NeuStar is the PA in all current state pooling efforts, it may enjoy a substantial advantage over other bidders if the transition is not included in the rollout schedule. Moreover, many aspects of the rollout are subject to pending petitions for reconsideration. WorldCom recommends that unless the Commission explicitly amends the rollout schedule, the Requirements Document should not be changed as Cox suggests.

¹ Comments of the Maine, New Hampshire and California Public Utilities Commissions at 3.

² In the Matter of Numbering Resource Optimization, CC Docket No. 99-200, *Report and Order* (rel. March 31, 2000), ¶¶ 237-239.

³ BellSouth Comments at 2.

⁴ *NRO Order*, ¶ 169.

⁵ Cox Comments at 7.

Pool population and replenishment. WorldCom agrees with Cox that the Requirements Document should provide additional detail on the manner in which to maintain pool inventories.⁶ State commissions also appear to be concerned about pool inventory levels. The Maine, New Hampshire, and California commissions suggest that the PA should exercise independent judgment regarding service provider forecasts and also consult with state commissions.⁷ WorldCom agrees with Cox that the Commission should define how the PA will manage and adjust pool inventories. But there is no reason why the initial population of pools should not be based strictly on service provider forecasts. Nor should the PA be required to consult with state commissions on this matter. If forecasts are overly optimistic, then the pools may contain a greater than 6 month inventory. Since blocks placed in rate area pools are not stranded resources, there is no long-run harm from this. WorldCom also agrees with Cox that there is no reason why blocks returned to the PA should be aged prior to reassignment.

Audits. Cox asks whether the PA should be subject to neutrality audits.⁸ All entities that administer telecommunications numbering resources should be required to comply with the Commission's neutrality criteria. The Commission should inform all prospective bidders that it may later order a neutrality audit to ensure continuing compliance with those criteria.

Penalties. WorldCom agrees with Cox that sufficient penalties should attach to non-performance, with payment due within 7 calendar days.⁹

⁶ *Id.*, 8-9.

⁷ Comments of the Maine, New Hampshire and California Public Utilities Commissions at 4.

⁸ Cox Comments at 6.

⁹ *Id.*, 12.

Interfaces. It is clear that the PA will have to interact with several different parties. To facilitate bidding, it is important that all necessary interface specifications be disclosed. WorldCom supports both NeuStar and Telcordia insofar as they seek to ensure that interface specifications be available to all potential bidders. This includes NPAC, LERG, and any other required interface. WorldCom objects to NeuStar's assertion that it was improper for the Requirements Document to refer to NPAC documents.¹⁰ The PA must interface with the NPAC to transfer information on block assignments.

WorldCom opposes the request of the Maine, New Hampshire, and California commissions that the PA be required to provide a special electronic interface for state commissions.¹¹ There are no benefits to such special development. If states require additional information beyond the reports generated by the PA in the normal course of business, such information can be provided as an extra, or enterprise service.

Bidders conference. WorldCom supports NeuStar's suggestion that a bidders' conference will be needed to ensure that all potential bidders fully understand the requirements.¹² Bidders should be required to submit questions in writing in advance of such a meeting. Such submission would allow the Commission to consult with the NANC and its Issue Management Group.

Corporate separation. NeuStar correctly points out that excessive separation of the PA from its corporate parent could drive costs up unnecessarily.¹³ WorldCom agrees and recommends that the Commission advise all bidders that the PA staff must be

¹⁰ NeuStar Comments at 9.

¹¹ Comments of the Maine, New Hampshire and California Public Utilities Commissions at 5.

¹² NeuStar Comments at 2.

¹³ *Id.*, 4.

dedicated to PA duties. There is no reason to require complete duplication of corporate overhead functions such as general counsel or payroll.

Pricing. NeuStar also raises concerns regarding a compensation adjustment mechanism.¹⁴ Since the Requirements Document includes volume-sensitive pricing, this would only be necessary in case of a contract amendment, or a new pricing element.

Intellectual property. The Commission must make clear that all intellectual property created or acquired by the PA for performance of its duties, will transfer to any successor PA. Without such a transfer, the incumbent PA will hold an undeserved advantage in future bids.

Degree of specificity. In general, Telcordia appears concerned that the Requirements Document does not include sufficient detail on exactly how the PA will perform its duties. WorldCom sees this as a virtue of the document. The Requirements Document should describe what services the PA will perform, not how it will perform them. This empowers bidders to use creativity in responding. Moreover, a bidders' conference should help ensure a level playing field for all bidders, while still allowing bidders to take a creative approach to the requirements.

In one area where the Requirements Document must be specific, Telcordia is unsatisfied – the requirement of 99.9% availability.¹⁵ The Commission should reject Telcordia's suggestion that this is too stringent of a standard. The NANC considered system availability and concluded that 99.9% was appropriate. The customer should really get to decide this issue, not a potential vendor.

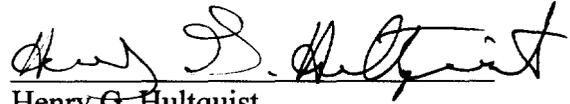
¹⁴ *Id.*, 4-5.

¹⁵ Telcordia Comments, Attachment 2, 4.

In conclusion, WorldCom urges the Commission to approve the Requirements Document with suggested improvements as described herein.

Respectfully submitted,

WorldCom, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry G. Hultquist", written over a horizontal line.

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October 2, 2000

CERTIFICATION OF SERVICE

I, Vivian Lee, do hereby certify that copies of the foregoing Reply Comments of WorldCom, Inc., In the Matter of Numbering Resource Optimization were sent via first class mail, postage paid, to the following on this 2nd day of October 2000..

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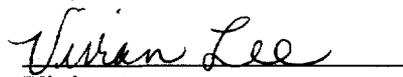
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