

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

In the Matter of

Petition Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 160 for
Partial Forbearance from the Commercial
Mobile Radio Services Number Portability
Obligation

WT Docket No. 01-184

REPLY COMMENTS OF VERIZON

None of the opponents of Verizon Wireless' petition have done anything to rebut Verizon Wireless' showing under section 10 that forbearance is required, nor have they offered any persuasive reason for the Commission not to grant the petition.

Even the opponents of the petition agree that the timely implementation of number pooling is essential.¹ Verizon Wireless has demonstrated that CMRS providers can fully participate in number pooling without making the substantial additional investment required for number portability. And Verizon Wireless has also demonstrated that the substantial additional investments for number portability will bring little consumer benefit. Pooling should be the first priority, and portability, which would serve no competitive purpose, should not be required. Last week, the Commission proposed an ambitious schedule for implementation of pooling nationwide, a schedule that starts in March 2002 and runs for two

¹ *E.g.*, WorldCom at 4, State Coordination Group at 13-14, PUCO at 3. And some mistakenly argue that the forbearance requested would delay pooling. *E.g.*, NARUC at 2-3.

years,² and all carriers, landline and wireless alike, should focus their efforts on getting that job done.

Two commentors oppose the petition because they say the relief would discriminate in favor of CMRS providers and against landline carriers.³ As far as Verizon, one of the “victims” of this supposed discrimination, is concerned, this is no reason to withhold the relief. More important, it would be bad public policy to impose a new and costly requirement on one class of carriers and their customers *solely* because another class of carriers already had the same requirement in order to avoid some “discrimination.” And it would be especially bad public policy to do this in the name of preventing “discrimination” when the new requirement would impose millions of dollars of new costs on the carriers that were supposedly being “discriminated against” if the new requirement were eliminated.

Another commentor claims that rate center differences do not raise any special problems for wireless portability.⁴ The North American Numbering Council, however, disagrees, has explained these problems to the Commission and has asked for Commission resolution.⁵ As the NANC explained, rate center differences would result in a disparity between landline and wireless carriers and could cause customer confusion. This disparity would have competitive effects, as customers could port their telephone numbers in one

² Public Notice, CC Docket No. 99-200, DA 01-2419, rel. Oct. 17, 2001.

³ State Coordination Group at 10; CPUC at 1, 22.

⁴ NHPUC at 6.

⁵ North American Numbering Council, Third Report on Wireless Wireline Integration § 5.1, dated September 30, 2000; North American Numbering Council, Second Report on Wireless Wireline Integration § 6.1, dated June 30, 1999; North American Numbering Council, Report on Wireless Wireline Integration — Rate Center Discussion, dated February 27, 1998 *available at* <http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/Nanc/>.

direction — from the landline to the wireless carrier — but could not, as a practical matter, always port them in the other direction. This is because the rate centers assigned to a wireless customer will often not be the rate center associated with the address where the landline service is located. In many cases, the rate center associated with the wireless telephone number will be one that would be a toll call to (and from) the landline address. This would mean that a customer who ported her wireless number to her landline service would be charged a toll rate to call her next-door neighbor, and the neighbor would be charged toll to return that call. This would severely limit the amount of wireless-to-landline porting. If the customer chose to port her wireless number anyway, her neighbor calling her would be surprised and confused to find that his call to the house next door had become a toll call. The Commission should not require the implementation of a system that has so many flaws.

None of the opponents of the petition denies that CMRS portability is an expensive proposition for CMRS providers. In addition, making wireless numbers portable will also significantly increase the shared industry costs. The systems will have to deal with many more telephone numbers as wireless numbers are added. And, more important is the fact that normal customer churn in the wireless industry (not increased because of number portability) is estimated to be 25 to 30 percent of the 110 million wireless customers every year. This churn will generate tens of millions of additional NPAC transactions and add tens of millions of dollars in NPAC costs. These costs would produce no corresponding customer benefits and would ultimately be borne by consumers.

Verizon, therefore, urges the Commission to grant the petition and to grant it promptly, to spare consumers the unnecessary costs wireless number portability would

produce and to allow the industry to focus on the pressing and far more important business of implementing number pooling.

Respectfully submitted,

/S/

John M. Goodman

Attorney for the Verizon
telephone companies

1300 I Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 515-2563

Edward Shakin
Of Counsel

Dated: October 22, 2001