

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of)
)
Deployment of Wireline Services Offering) CC Docket No. 98-147
Advanced Service Capabilities)

COMMENTS OF SPRINT CORPORATION

Sprint Corporation hereby respectfully submits its comments in response to the Public Notice released on March 4, 2002 (DA 02-506) in the above-captioned proceeding. In this Public Notice, the Commission asks for comment on a request from Verizon Communications to clarify that Section 51.323(k)(2) of the Commission's Rules does not preclude an incumbent LEC from "requir[ing] collocators to terminate their facilities on a Point of Termination bay" (POT bay).¹ Sprint does not oppose use of POT bays as a point of termination, so long as this arrangement is agreeable to *both* the incumbent LEC (ILEC) and the collocator. However, Section 51.323(k)(2) cannot be interpreted as allowing the ILEC to unilaterally require the collocator to terminate at the POT bay rather than at the collocation cage.

In its December 19 letter, Verizon notes that use of a POT bay allows both Verizon and the collocator to perform certain installation and repair work without the other party's presence. Some collocators may find this flexibility of sufficient value that they willingly agree to terminate at the POT bay, and Sprint accordingly believes that such an option should be allowed. However, there are several significant disadvantages

¹ See Letter from W. Scott Randolph, Verizon, to Magalie R. Salas, Secretary, FCC, CC Docket No. 98-147, dated December 19, 2001, p. 1.

to terminating at a POT bay which make other collocators averse to this arrangement.

Terminating at a POT bay rather than at the collocation cage:

- forces the collocator to incur additional costs for the cabinet, the floor space, and the cabling between the POT bay and the collocation cage;²
- doubles the risk of an installation error (connections must be made between the POT bay and the collocation cage, and between the cage and the main distribution frame – there are four connections rather than two), and significantly increases the risk of transmission errors as well;
- raises security concerns, since Verizon's POT bays are open, and shared by multiple collocators;
- presents capacity considerations. If cabinet utilization is at or near capacity, a collocator may be forced to use multiple POT bays to handle all of its terminations. Thus, contrary to Verizon's assertions (December 19 letter, p. 1), it is possible that not all of a collocator's cables will terminate at a single location.
- complicates the repair process. It has been Sprint's experience that resolving circuit problems is generally more cumbersome if a POT bay is involved, than if there is no POT bay. In many, if not most, cases, a non-working circuit is attributable to an incorrect circuit facility assignment (CFA), the connection of the wire to the peg. Where there is no POT bay involved, once the CFA has been corrected, Sprint supplements its initial local service request (LSR) on-line, and the correction (or "repair") is made. However, in situations involving a POT bay, Sprint has found that Verizon will not accept an LSR supplement, but instead requires the submission of a trouble ticket. Opening, tracking, processing and closing a repair ticket is a far more time-consuming and resource-intensive process than is a simple LSR supplement.

Furthermore, while a POT bay does allow some independent installation and testing, it does not eliminate the need for joint testing which requires the presence of technicians from both Verizon and the collocator. Thus, it would be incorrect to assume that POT bays obviate the need for coordination.

The operational and financial disadvantages associated with terminating at a POT bay are sufficient basis for the Commission to conclude that mandatory termination at a

² For example, Verizon-Virginia assesses collocators a \$600 nonrecurring charge plus a \$6 monthly charge per termination for the cabinet alone.

POT bay is an unreasonable practice by the ILEC. In addition, the Commission's orders in the *Advanced Services* and *Expanded Interconnection* proceedings do not support an interpretation that the ILEC can require collocators to terminate at a POT bay rather than at the collocation cage. In the *Advanced Services Order*, the Commission, citing comments relating specifically to POT bays, stated that ILECs "may not require competitors to use an intermediate interconnection arrangement in lieu of direct connection to the incumbent's network if technically feasible...."³ Although Verizon insists that the POT bay is a direct connection to its network (December 19 letter, p. 1), the POT bay does not perform the same functions as the ILEC's main distribution frame (MDF), and indeed, many ILECs do not even use POT bays as a point of termination.⁴ There is no dispute that a connection from the collocation cage to the ILEC's MDF is still required when the CLEC terminates at the POT bay – a POT bay alone is not enough to satisfy a CLEC's collocation needs. Even though the POT bay may be a "physical demarcation point" (*id.*, para. 106), it is only the initial, but not the ultimate, point of physical connection between the ILEC's network and the CLEC's facilities. In other words, a POT bay is an intermediate interconnection arrangement which, under Section 51.323(k)(2), the ILEC cannot force the collocator to accept.

³ *Deployment of Wireline Services Offering Advanced Telecommunications Capability*, 14 FCC Rcd 4761, 4785 (para. 42) (1999). This finding is codified in Section 51.323(k)(2) of the Rules.

⁴ See, e.g., *Local Exchange Carriers' Rates, Terms and Conditions for Expanded Interconnection Through Physical Collocation for Special Access and Switched Transport*, 12 FCC Rcd 18730, 18779-80 (para. 105) (1997).

Respectfully submitted,

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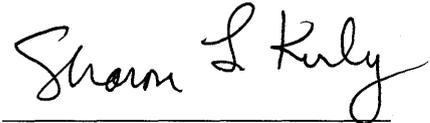
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing Comments of Sprint Corporation was delivered by electronic mail, on this 25th day of March, 2002, to the parties listed below.



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