

Carolyn Sterling-Deer

December 31, 2002

Subject: Local Internet Service Providers and Rate Increases

The U. S. Federal Communication Commission:

This letter is in response to the proposed ruling by Verizon and other Bell monopolies and the rulemaking proceeding to reevaluate regulations concerning their obligation to connect with competitors.

First, it is important to note that these large conglomerates are not available to rural customers residing in areas such as Milford, PA. In previous attempts to link up with large Internet providers such as America Online, I have encountered a lack of service because large Internet providers do not provide local access numbers. To use their service, local customers in rural areas are required to dial long-distance phone lines. This is a major reason that our local Internet provider is crucial in providing local access to the Internet and World Wide Web.

In addition to Internet access, our local Internet Service Providers are available to supply technical assistance in a form not available through larger corporations. Local office personnel offer in-home service as well as online technical assistance. These features are the most valuable aspects of local ISPs.

I am currently a doctoral candidate who uses the Internet to search local and distant libraries for resources, so it is of paramount importance that I, along with other researchers, have efficient local access to Internet services. From my personal experience with obtaining such Internet access and service, only my local Internet Service Provider has been able to guarantee me the efficient local access needed to complete my work.

A final point, and most urgent one, is the notion that larger Internet Service Providers offer better, less expensive service. This is absolutely untrue. Their service places an additional burden on the rural consumer since we are forced to dial long distance numbers fifty or more miles from our home location.

As a long-time Internet user, I urge the FCC to consider the customer's needs in reassessing the configuration of Internet access. Moreover, the FCC should not permit the Bell monopolies to discontinue interconnecting with local Internet Service Providers since this would result in lost or diminished service to the consumers who depend on local service for Internet access.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Sterling-Deer