March 3, 2005

The Honorable Michael Copps
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates' Petition For Declaratory Ruling, CG Docket No. 04-208

Dear Commissioner Copps:

I am writing to urge you to deny a petition filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA) asking the Commission to declare the regulatory line items are prohibited unless they are mandated or authorized by a federal, state, or local government. If granted, the NASUCA petition would provide consumers less complete and accurate information than is currently available to them. Just as the Commission has concluded in the Truth-In-Billing proceeding, consumers benefit from more, not less, information about the services they purchase. The wireless industry's efforts in developing a Voluntary Consumer Code for Wireless Service are entirely consistent with this principle.

Over the last decade, wireless consumers have benefited immensely from lower prices and improved services. The price of a wireless minute dropped 83% from 1994 to 2004. Meanwhile, wireless carriers have greatly expanded their coverage and upgraded networks, improving reception, enabling more advanced services, and generally enhancing the utility of having a mobile phone. Consumers have responded, increasing subscribership from 19 million wireless subscribers in June 1994 to almost 170 million wireless subscribers in June 2004. The wireless industry is proud of this track record. Few industries can claim a better track record in reducing prices and improving services than the wireless industry.

Unfortunately, the proliferation of federal, state, and local taxes, fees, and surcharges threatens these efforts. If granted, the NASUCA petition would prevent wireless carriers from effectively communicating with customers about the regulatory costs of the services they purchase. If wireless carriers are prevented from using line items – their best mode of communication with their customers – I am afraid that state

and local regulatory authorities will impose more taxes, fees, and surcharges on wireless carriers. These costs ultimately will be passed through to consumers through higher rates. Such added costs will artificially suppress demand for the new and innovative products and services that wireless carriers offer their customers. This is the wrong result for consumers.

In short, I cannot stress to you how important this issue is for the wireless industry. State-by-state regulation of wireless carrier line-items will result in more inconsistent and more confusing customer bills, result in consumers having less information about the nature of charges on their bills, and will impose additional costs on the industry that inevitably will be passed through to customers in the form of higher service-related charges. I therefore urge you to reject the NASUCA petition. If you have any questions concerning this issue, please contact me at (202) 736-3203.

Sincerely,

Steve Largent

Steve Largent

Cc: Jessica Rosenworcel
Jay Keithley
John Muleta