Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

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

REPLY COMMENTS OF THE
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) respectfully submits these Reply Comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission's (Commission's) Fifth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) in CC Docket No. 99-200.[1] The PSCW supports the delegation of authority to the states to implement mandatory thousands-block pooling at their discretion, and endorses the comments of other filers who advocated that approach in their initial comments.

The Issues

On February 24, 2006, the Commission released an order granting the petitions of the Public Service Commission of West Virginia, the Nebraska Public Service Commission, the Okalahoma Corporation Commission, the Michigan Public Service Commission, and the Missouri Public Service Commission for delegated authority to implement mandatory thousands-block pooling. In the FNPRM, also adopted on that date, the Commission "recognized the invaluable role of the state commissions in number administration and optimization"[2] and requested comments on whether it should extend mandatory pooling by giving the states

[1] In the Matter of Numbering Resource Optimization, Order and Fifth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CC Docket No. 99-200, FCC 06-14, Rel. February 24, 2006.
[2] FNPRM, para. 16.

delegated authority to implement mandatory thousands-block pooling at their discretion or alternately, whether the Commission should continue to review requests for delegated authority on a case-by-case basis.

The PSCW Supports the Delegation of Authority to the States to Implement Mandatory Thousands-Block Pooling at Their Discretion

In response to the FNPRM, numerous state regulators, consumer advocates, and telecommunications providers submitted comments to the Commission supporting delegated authority to the states to implement mandatory thousands-block number pooling at their discretion.[3] Many of the comments indicated that delegated authority would

- Give the states the ability to respond quickly and efficiently to number resource optimization issues as they arise.
- Minimize consumer expense and inconvenience by delaying the need to implement area code relief plans.
- Conserve valuable state and Commission administrative resources associated with the current case-by-case approach.

The PSCW concurs with these observations and believes that the current Commission process of reviewing state requests for delegated authority to implement mandatory pooling on a case-by-case basis is time-consuming and inefficient. As new technologies or services that require number assignments emerge (i.e., Voice-Over Internet Protocol or Telematics), and as existing technologies expand (i.e., wireless and paging), it is vital that states have the ability to promptly respond to numbering resource issues as they arise. Throughout the history of the Commission's number resources optimization docket (CC Docket No. 99-200), the Commission

[3] Fourteen states, as well as the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), filed comments with the Commission in support of delegated authority to implement mandatory thousands-block pooling at its discretion, including: California, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Texas. Two consumer advocacy groups and various telecommunications providers filed similar comments, including: the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA), the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor, Sprint/Nextel, Verizon, the Nebraska Rural Independent Companies and the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO).

has encouraged and taken steps to implement conservation measures to preserve the valuable and finite resource of telephone numbers. Thousands-block pooling is a proven conservation tool, and a delegation to states to implement mandatory pooling as needs arise in their respective jurisdictions, complements past actions, avoids administrative delays, and, likely results in no harm to providers.

Like many states, Wisconsin is facing further area code exhausts in the future. Avoidance of area code relief is not realistic in many instances; however, the postponement of the need for relief is of benefit to both customers and providers, alike. Conservation efforts that can achieve that postponement are thus valuable. Number pooling is a very real and effective tool in this regard.[4] Wisconsin currently has two area codes that are forecasted to exhaust within the next 3½ years. According to the North American Numbering Plan Administrator's (NANPA) most recent area code exhaust report,[5] both the 715 and 920 area codes are projected to exhaust in the fourth-quarter of 2009. Although the PSCW has made no plans to mandate pooling at this time, that tool should be available, if circumstances dictate its need, and such action could serve to lengthen area code lives.

NeuStar, in its role as the national Pooling Administrator (PA), estimates that pooling has saved 41 NNXs in the 715 area code and 155 NNXs in the 920 area code since mandatory pooling began. The PSCW believes that an exploration of mandatory thousands-block pooling in the remaining rate centers may be warranted as a means to further postpone area code relief

[4] Mandatory number pooling was implemented in 25 of the 253 rate centers located in the 715 area code on August 6, 2003. At that time, the projected 715 area code exhaust date was the fourth quarter of 2006. Mandatory number pooling was implemented in 11 of the 126 rate centers located in the 920 area code on April 4, 2003. At that time, the projected 920 area code exhaust date was the first-quarter of 2005. Pooling has been a key reason that these forecasted exhaust dates have been extended, most recently to year-end 2009. According to data in the Local Exchange Routing Guide (LERG), the vast majority of Wisconsin rate centers are local number portability (LNP) capable and, therefore, would be able to engage in number pooling. Two hundred forty six of the two hundred fifty three rate centers in the 715 area code are LNP-capable, while one hundred twenty three of the one hundred twenty six rate centers in the 920 area code are LNP-capable.

[5] http://www.nanpa.com/pdf/NRUF/April%202006%20NPA%20Exhaust%20Projections.pdf.

measures in the 715 and 920 area codes. With delegated authority to implement pooling, this state (and others) would not face the administrative schedule that the case-by-case request process for delegation imposes.

Conclusion

The authority to implement appropriate and necessary steps in order to conserve number resources should be available to all state commissions. The PSCW urges the Commission to extend the potential for the use of mandatory number pooling by giving the states delegated authority to implement mandatory thousands-block pooling at their discretion.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin, ____June 14, 2006_____

By the Commission

_____/s/ *Sandra J. Paske* _____
Sandra J. Paske
Secretary to the Commission

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