

August 20, 2010

Marlene Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554



Re: Notice of *Ex Parte* Presentation  
CG Docket No. 09-158 (Consumer Information and Disclosure)

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Thursday, August 19, 2010, Benjamin Lennett and Bincy Ninan of the New America Foundation; Jessica Gonzalez of the National Hispanic Media Coalition; and Matt Wood of Media Access Project (collectively, the “Public Interest Representatives”) met with Joel Gurin, Chief of the Commission’s Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau; Mark Stone, Deputy Bureau Chief; and Colleen Heitkamp, Chief of the Bureau’s Consumer Policy Division.

The Public Interest Representatives reiterated their positions taken in comments jointly submitted by their organizations and others in the above-captioned docket on July 6, 2010. Those comments dealt primarily with the topic of “bill shock,” and urged the Commission to require wireless providers to supply automatic and free usage and roaming alerts to protect consumers from excessive and unexpected increases in their monthly bills. At the meeting, the Public Interest Representatives discussed various reasons for bill shock, including poorly disclosed and described terms of service and service limitations; unexpected and excessive overage charges; and undisclosed or poorly explained taxes and fees that providers pass through to subscribers.

The Public Interest Representatives proposed various additional solutions to the problem of bill shock, and similar solutions that would address other “truth-in-billing” and transparency problems arising from service provider practices, monthly service caps, and unannounced interference with promised service. All of these solutions revolve around more adequate, accurate, and uniform disclosure requirements for basic and detailed service terms and price information, with prominent and clear disclosures mandated at point-of-sale, on providers’ websites, and in monthly bills for post-paid customers. Such materials should be presented in plain language, and should be required to be made available at minimum in all languages in which providers advertise and market their services.

Finally, the Public Interest Representatives discussed obstacles that subscribers face to ending or transferring service between competing providers, including early termination fees and device locking mechanisms that deter or actively hinder switching to different providers in the marketplace. The Public Interest Representatives and Bureau attendees primarily discussed these transparency problems and obstacles as they are experienced by mobile voice and mobile wireless broadband subscribers, but also touched upon similarly poor disclosures, practices, and resulting “shock” faced by many wireline broadband and multichannel video customers as well.

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We submit this letter today pursuant to Section 1.1206(b) of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §1.1206(b). Please contact the undersigned should you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Matthew F. Wood

Associate Director  
Media Access Project

cc: Joel Gurin  
Mark Stone  
Colleen Heitkamp