



California Association of
Competitive Telecommunications Companies

Communications, Commerce, Community

February 17, 2011

VIA ECFS

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: Notice of Ex Parte Communication; Business Broadband Marketplace, WC Docket
No. 10-188

Dear Ms. Dortch,

On February 16, 2011, Sarah DeYoung, President and Executive Director of the California Association of Competitive Telecommunications Companies (CALTEL) met with Heather Hendrickson, Lisa Hone, William Dever, Tim Stelzig (by phone bridge) of the Competition Policy Division of the Wireline Competition Bureau. The discussion is summarized by and was consistent with the attached handouts which were provided at the meeting. In addition, Ms. DeYoung was asked about pole attachment proceedings underway in California, and competitor use of POTS vs. VoIP technology to roll out voice service. On February 17, 2011, Ms. DeYoung responded further to the inquiry about the pole attachment proceeding in California with the attached e-mail to William Dever.

Sincerely,

/s/ _____

Sarah DeYoung
Executive Director

Enclosure

cc: (via email)
Heather Hendrickson
Lisa Hone
William Dever
Tim Stelzig

Copper Preservation: Is It Enough to Protect It from Being Retired?

SMALL BUSINESS BROADBAND PLAN

WC 10-188

CALTEL

Sarah DeYoung, Executive Director

February, 2011

Last fall, CALTEL filed opening and reply comments on the Commission's Small Business Broadband Public Notice:

- We provided in-depth profiles of 3 very different CLECs serving the California business market
 - TelePacific Communications
 - Creative Interconnect Communications
 - Sonic Telecom
- Despite their differences, all CALTEL members rely on access to ILEC last-mile facilities in order to reach business customers
 - The much-maligned copper loop is an essential component to providing high speed internet service due to technological advances (e.g. Ethernet over copper)
- Access to unbundled fiber (in the feeder plant, building laterals, and interconnection with other networks) is increasingly critical
- Other barriers described included:
 - High special access rack rates
 - Inability to obtain UNE DS1 transport in unimpaired Central Offices
 - Lack of just and reasonable rates for delisted UNEs
 - Clear rules for IP-to-IP interconnection

Since filing our comments, winter storms in California in December, 2010 exposed vulnerabilities in ILEC copper infrastructure

- Over 100,000 ILEC landline customers lost service in December; many for 2-3 weeks
- According to data collected but not yet reported by the California PUC, AT&T service quality was already significantly below benchmark throughout 2010 (see chart on next page)
- “Pulp cable”, although it should be protected by constant air-pressure, proved especially vulnerable (see NBC Los Angeles article attached)
- Technicians claim that routine maintenance (what AT&T referred to at the hearing as “rehab” work vs. “demand” work) is no longer being performed

Significance of outages and missed benchmarks resulted in questions and concerns from regulators and legislators about redirection of ILEC investment and resources to new technologies and products (wireless, video)

- Resulted in California Senate Informational Hearing on Friday, February 4
(see attached Background Summary from California Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities and Communication)

**Out of Service Repair Time
2010 Monthly Reports for AT&T and Verizon***

**General Order 133-C Standard:
90% of customers should have service restored within 24 hours**

AT&T**	1st Quarter			2nd Quarter			3rd Quarter		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Total # of outage report tickets	97,582	81,124	71,933	61,260	55,337	56,389	57,777	59,719	55,178
Total # of repair tickets restored in ≤ 24 hrs.	49,508	32,639	38,385	23,819	18,910	18,426	18,483	32,261	41,695
% of repair tickets restored ≤ 24 hrs.	50.73%	40.23%	53.36%	38.88%	34.17%	32.68%	31.99%	54.02%	75.56%

Verizon**	1st Quarter			2nd Quarter			3rd Quarter		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Total # of outage report tickets	22,949	20,156	22,249	16,111	13,650	14,240	14,450	14,196	13,115
Total # of repair tickets restored in ≤ 24 hrs.	17,781	17,961	15,412	12,751	11,627	11,055	10,271	11,819	10,629
% of repair tickets restored ≤ 24 hrs.	77.48%	89.11%	69.27%	79.14%	85.18%	77.63%	71.08%	83.26%	81.04%

*Monthly data reported to the CPUC for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters of 2010 as required by General Order 133-C and CPUC decision D.09-07-019, with exclusions for Sundays and federal holidays, delays due to customer requested appointments, and delays due to circumstances beyond the carrier's control such as catastrophic events (a state of emergency declared by a federal or state authority) or widespread service outage (an outage affecting at least 3% of a carrier's customers in the state).

**The data presented is as reported by the companies with the calculation of exclusions according to the companies' interpretation of GO 133-C and D. 09-07-019. CPUC staff report that they have been in ongoing discussions with AT&T regarding whether the manner in which AT&T reports the data and calculates exclusions complies with GO 133-C.

The impact on CLECs and their business customers was equally significant and statewide

- CLEC customers experienced widespread and lengthy outages
 - For example, TelePacific reported over 3,000 customers with outages
 - Non-high cap customers were out-of-service for an average of 15 days
 - Even weeks after the storms had ended, TelePacific reported that customers were waiting an average of 8 days for service to be restored
- Pursuant to Interconnection Agreements, ILECs are required to pay performance penalties for missed benchmarks, but may avoid penalties if a “Force Majeure” is invoked
 - AT&T noticed CLECs that it was invoking a Force Majeure condition for the entire states of California and Nevada effective December 16 through January 15
 - Verizon noticed CLECs that it was invoking a Force Majeure effective December 22 through January 29
- Even though the severe weather was primarily isolated to Southern California, AT&T has informed CLECs that the need to redeploy technicians from Northern California and Nevada justified extending the Force Majeure to those areas

- In the meantime, CLECs have provided credits and other remediation efforts to restore customer confidence and provide assurances of network reliability

Deregulation has led the California PUC and other state commissions to eliminate service quality penalty mechanisms

- In 2009, California PUC determined that competition in the marketplace would ensure high service quality and eliminated the previous penalty mechanism for poor performance
- Prior to elimination of these penalties, AT&T was fined \$1.8M by the California PUC for missing the out-of-service standard in 2005 and 2006
- At the urging of the Legislature, the PUC may open an Investigation and revisit service quality standards and enforcement mechanisms

Examples from other states:

- In May, 2010, AT&T was fined \$1.12M by the Connecticut DPUC for missing similar out-of-service restoral benchmarks between 2001 and 2009, but a final settlement is still pending
- In November, 2009, Verizon reached a \$2M settlement with the Florida PSC for missing out-of-service standards in 2007 and 2008

- In March, 2010, the Louisiana PSC decided not to enforce a fine that was a condition of AT&T's 2006 merger with Bell South

Conclusions:

- CALTEL and many other commenters on the Commission's Small Business Broadband Public Notice stressed the importance of preserving access to ILEC last-mile copper facilities
- Previously, the most significant risk to copper preservation was perceived to be ILEC replacement and/or abandonment (retirement)
- The service quality issues that have surfaced in California and other states suggest that ILEC decisions about the allocation of investment dollars and workforce to routine maintenance may present a more imminent and serious threat

- CALTEL urges the Commission to work with the states to investigate these issues and factor them into its determinations about small businesses' access to broadband and competitors' access to ILEC last-mile facilities

AGENDA
INFORMATIONAL HEARING

Telephone Service Outages and Infrastructure Needs

Friday, February 4, 2011
10 a.m.
Los Angeles Police Department
Ron Deaton Auditorium
100 W. 1st Street
Los Angeles

I. Opening Statement

- Senator Alex Padilla, Chairman

II. Overview of Telephone Service Outages and Customer Impact

- Jack Leutza, Director, Communications Division
California Public Utilities Commission
- Dorothy Weintraub, at-home small business owner
Los Angeles
- Dick Jalkut, Chief Executive Officer
TelePacific - Competitive Local Exchange Carrier

III. Carrier Perspective: Maintaining Telephone Network Reliability and Restoring Service to Customers

- Ken McNeely, President - California
AT&T

- Bill Chubb, Vice President – Core Installation & Maintenance – West Region
AT&T
- Tim McCallion, President - West Region
Verizon
- Becky McCurdy, Director, Regional Operations
Verizon

IV. Other Perspectives on Maintaining Telephone Network Reliability and Restoring Service to Customers

- Jim Weitkamp, International Vice President
Communications Workers of America District 9
- Regina Costa, Telecommunications Research Director
The Utility Reform Network

V. Service Quality Standards in a Competitive Telecommunications Market

- Jack Leutza, Director, Communications Division
California Public Utilities Commission
- Phyllis White, Deputy Director
Division of Ratepayer Advocates
- Carolyn McIntyre, President
California Cable & Telecommunications Association
- Michael Day, California Regulatory Counsel
CTIA – The Wireless Association

VI. Public Comment

Telephone Service Outages and Infrastructure Needs

Customers Lose Telephone Service after Rain Storms

In December 2010 California had the highest monthly statewide rainfall in more than a century. By mid-December, statewide rainfall was above normal. Then, the last week of December, a massive storm pummeled the state, especially southern California, bringing the monthly total to nearly 10 inches, the highest statewide monthly rainfall since 1889 (with some variation by location), according to weather officials. By December 23rd, the Governor had declared a state of emergency for 12 counties: Tuolumne, Kern, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Louis Obispo, Tulare, Kings, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Inyo, and San Diego (see Attachment A).

As rain soaked the California landscape, more than 100,000 customers of AT&T and Verizon lost landline telephone service, many for two or three weeks, leaving them unable to call 911, make other calls or connect to the Internet. At the peak, at least 79,000 AT&T customers and 30,000 Verizon customers were without landline telephone service. Even as the companies dispatched extra resources to restore service, and a week or more after the rain stopped, an extraordinary number of customers continued to report a loss of service. By the last few days of January, a month with only 30 percent of normal rainfall, the companies had brought the number of customers out of service down to a level typical in the normal course of business. During this time, the companies had provided some customers with call forwarding to a working line or wireless telephones. Attachment B (AT&T) and Attachment C (Verizon) shows the companies' progress in restoring service to customers, as reported to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

Public Safety and Customer Impact of Outages

Prolonged and widespread service outages create a serious threat to public safety because when customers lose landline telephone service they lose the most reliable way to call 911 in an emergency. Moreover, loss of telephone service for even one day – let alone weeks – disrupts daily life and impacts jobs and economic activity, creating financial losses for individuals and businesses. With an ever-growing number of customers getting Internet service through the same line as voice telephone service, loss of service on that line means being “unconnected” – unable to access email, operate an on-line business, attend an online college class, pay bills, fill a prescription, order merchandise, apply for a job or any of the many other activities regularly conducted online every single day.

In addition, competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs) that lease facilities from incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) such as AT&T and Verizon are unable to serve their end users when outages occur. Pursuant to interconnection agreements, ILECs are required to pay CLECs penalties when the lines are not working. However, for network outages due to circumstances beyond their control, the ILECs may avoid these penalties by invoking a “force majeure” provision in the agreements. AT&T invoked this provision effective December 16th through January 15th for all CLECs in California and Nevada. Verizon invoked the provision effective December 22nd to potentially relieve it of paying penalties. In the meantime, CLECs have to accommodate their end users and provide assurances of service reliability in order to maintain customers.

Maintaining the Copper Network

According to telephone network technical experts, the portion of the telecommunications network that is most susceptible to damage from massive rainfall is copper plant buried underground. Copper wires, especially the kind typical in old service areas, require special routine maintenance to keep out moisture that causes trouble conditions leading to outages. Newer technologies, such as fiber optics, typically deployed in order to provide customers video and high-speed Internet access, as well as voice service, are much more resistant to water damage.

The ever-growing customer demand for broadband and access through a single pipe to a bundle of services (voice, data, video and Internet) may create an incentive for carriers to prioritize deployment of fiber over maintenance of old copper plant. On the other hand, copper facilities remain useful for voice-only service and also are useful in providing some advanced services, such as digital subscriber line to facilitate broadband and ethernet over copper for small business applications. CLECs rely heavily on leased copper lines to provide data and other services to their business customers. Thus, despite emphasis on deployment of new broadband technologies, maintaining existing copper facilities is essential to a reliable telecommunications network.

Service Quality Standards

A telephone corporation that provides local exchange service is required by statute to “furnish and maintain adequate, efficient, just and reasonable service necessary to promote the safety, health, comfort and convenience” of its customers (Public Utilities Code Sec. 451). The CPUC is required to enforce this requirement and reasonable statewide service quality standards regarding network technical quality, customer service, installation, repair and billing (Public Utilities Code Sec. 2897). One of the CPUC’s service quality standards is out of service (OOS) repair time – the amount of time a customer is without dial tone and unable to make or receive calls before a repair is made.

The current standard for OOS repair time is in General Order (GO) 133-C, which the CPUC adopted in July 2009. GO 133-C specifies that a telephone corporation should restore service within 24 hours for at least 90 percent of residential and small business customers who lose

service. Carriers are required to file quarterly reports with the CPUC showing on a monthly basis what percent of customers had service restored within 24 hours. Sundays and federal holidays and repairs delayed due to customer requested appointments are excluded from the calculation. In addition, a carrier may exclude a month with maintenance delays due to circumstances beyond its control, including a “catastrophic event” (any event in the carrier’s service area for which there is a declaration of a state of emergency by a federal or state authority) or a “widespread service outage” (an outage affecting at least 3 percent of a carrier’s customers statewide).

Reports filed by AT&T and Verizon for the first three quarters of 2010 show that neither carrier met the OOS standard of restoring service within 24 hours for 90 percent of customers, even after allowed exclusions were made (see Attachment D). Carriers are required to file reports for the fourth quarter of 2010 by February 15, 2011.

CPUC Enforcement Action for Inadequate OOS Repair Time

Historically, a telephone company’s general rate case enabled the CPUC to evaluate service quality and ensure that the company made sufficient investment in infrastructure and workforce to maintain a reliable network and adequate service. These expenses were then recovered through rates. However, the state’s four largest carriers – AT&T, Verizon, Frontier and SureWest – now set prices for services without a rate case, and the CPUC’s scrutiny of investment in operations and maintenance is diminished. Company reporting on compliance with service quality standards and customer complaints are now the CPUC’s primary means of monitoring service quality.

GO 133-B, in effect through 2009, required carriers to report on nine service quality standards, including the number of “trouble tickets,” a report generated when a customer lost dial tone or experienced other trouble on a line. GO 133-B did not include a separate measure for OOS repair time. However, the CPUC has deemed OOS repair time to be an “extremely significant” aspect of service quality and “one that merits our specific attention” and has imposed fines and penalties when a carrier repeatedly fails to meet OOS standards.

In 2001, in a complaint case filed by the Division of Ratepayer Advocates (DRA), the CPUC found that the average OOS repair time for residential customers of AT&T (then Pacific Bell Telephone Company) had increased 45% from 29.3 hours in 1996 to 42.5 hours in 2000. The decline occurred during the exact time the CPUC had ordered AT&T to maintain service quality as a condition of approving the merger between Pacific Bell and Southwestern Bell Company. The CPUC held: “The sharp decline in service quality of nearly 50% over a mere four years, coupled with Pacific’s knowledge thereof and its lack of any attempt to remedy the deterioration, constitute a violation of Section 451,” which requires that service be “adequate, efficient, just and reasonable.” The CPUC required AT&T to meet a standard of 29.3 hours for initial OOS repairs and 39.4 hours for repeat OOS repairs (same line OOS within 30 days of initial repair), and imposed penalties for noncompliance. AT&T’s performance under this penalty mechanism was as follows:

- 2003 – met initial and repeat OOS standards.
- 2004 – met initial and repeat OOS standards.
- 2005 – failed to meet initial OOS standard for three months and fined \$900,000.
- 2006 – failed to meet initial OOS standard for three months and fined \$900,000.
- 2007 – failed to meet initial and repeat OOS standard for one month.
- 2008 – failed to meet initial OOS standard for three months and repeat OOS standard for two months.
- 2009 – failed to meet initial OOS and repeat OOS standard for two months. (reports required for only first six months of 2009).

In a resolution imposing the penalties for 2006, the CPUC emphasized the threat to public safety from prolonged outages and committed to diligent monitoring of the issue:

“[W]e note that hundreds of AT&T’s residential customers’ outage services were not restored for 240 hours (10 days) even after exclusions. Public safety issues arise when customers’ phones are out of service for extended periods of time, because access to emergency services may be jeopardized. We will continue to monitor AT&T’s outage repair efforts and direct AT&T to provide corrective measures if similar problems persist in the future.”

CPUC Eliminates Penalty Mechanism for Inadequate OOS Repair Time

The CPUC discontinued the AT&T OOS penalty mechanism in July 2009 when it adopted GO 133-C and the OOS standard of 90 percent in 24 hours. Rather than impose any automatic penalties for noncompliance with GO 133-C, the CPUC authorized the staff to require carriers to present proposals on improving performance, require monthly reporting, and recommend that the CPUC institute a formal investigation for alleged failure to meet a standard for six or more consecutive months. No investigation has been instituted to date, although the CPUC staff reports that they have been in ongoing discussions with AT&T regarding whether the manner in which AT&T reports the data and calculates exclusions complies with GO 133-C.

On August 16, 2010, after failing to meet the GO 133-C standard for OOS in each preceding month of the year, AT&T filed a plan for corrective action stating that “[w]e have just become aware of the problems in meeting the OOS requirement.” AT&T stated that it was initiating the following activities to achieve progress toward meeting the OOS standard:

- Beginning in August, overtime hours have been increased.
- Personnel from other workgroups have been borrowed and assigned to maintenance field work.
- In order to make the most of available personnel, discretionary administrative tasks, training, and routine maintenance will be deferred where appropriate.

AT&T’s third quarter GO 133-C report showed substantial increases in the percent of OOS reports cleared in 24 hours for both August (54%) and September (75.56%), although CPUC staff claims these numbers overstate performance by incorrectly calculating exclusions.

Ensuring Service Quality in a Competitive Market

The CPUC's July 2009 decision relied on a competitive marketplace as justification for eliminating AT&T's OOS penalty mechanism and reducing the number of service quality measures. The CPUC found that competition applies a natural pressure for carriers to provide high quality service, but that some service quality reporting was nonetheless warranted because of the CPUC's statutory duty to ensure adequate service quality. Rather than a penalty mechanism, the CPUC focused on customer education and required that carriers' service quality reports be posted on the CPUC web site. This will allow consumers to use the data to decide whether a carrier's level of service meets their needs and make an informed choice among service providers.

To date, however, a year and a half after the decision, and more than a year after the first monthly data was gathered, no service quality data has been posted on the CPUC web site. The CPUC cites the ongoing dispute about calculation of exclusions from OOS repair time as the primary reason why no data has been posted. Resolution of the matter has not been elevated for commission action.

However, even if the data were posted, there is a significant question as to whether service quality data about only landline service providers gives customers sufficient information about the choices available for telephone service. Except in certain markets, customers rarely are choosing between AT&T or Verizon or other incumbent carriers. Rather, the choice customers face is between one of those landline carriers and a wireless provider or a cable company or another provider of voice service using Internet-based technology. Information about all these providers would enable customers to make an informed choice on a provider.

For the text of the CPUC's General Order 133-C and the 2009 decision adopting it, see:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/Telco/Information+for+providing+service/Service+Quality.htm>

For the text of the 2001 CPUC decision imposing an OOS penalty mechanism on AT&T, see:

http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/WORD_PDF/FINAL_DECISION/11807.PDF

For the text of the 2007 CPUC Resolution T-17120 imposing OOS penalties on AT&T, see:

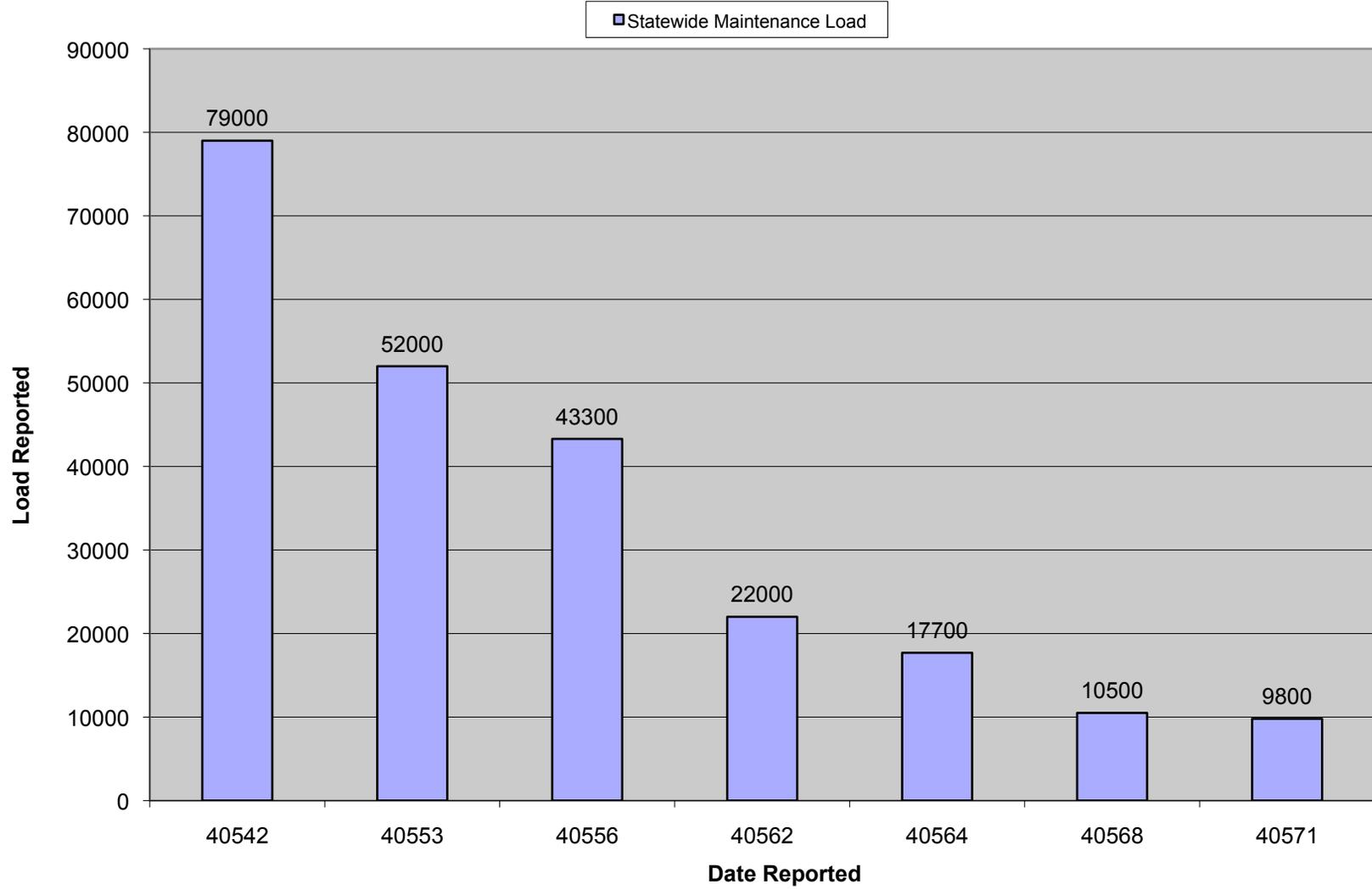
http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/published/Final_resolution/74868.htm

States of Emergency

Date Declared	Start Date	End Date	Issued By	Number of Affected Counties
December 9, 2010	December 9, 2010		Governor Schwarzenegger	1 - Tuolumne
December 21, 2010	December 21, 2010		Governor Schwarzenegger	6 - Kern, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, and Tulare
December 23, 2010	December 23, 2010		Acting Governor Abel Maldonado	3 - Kings, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara
December 23, 2010	December 23, 2010		Acting Governor Abel Maldonado	2 - Inyo and San Diego
January 26, 2011	January 26, 2011		President Obama	10 - Inyo, Kern, Kings, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Tulare

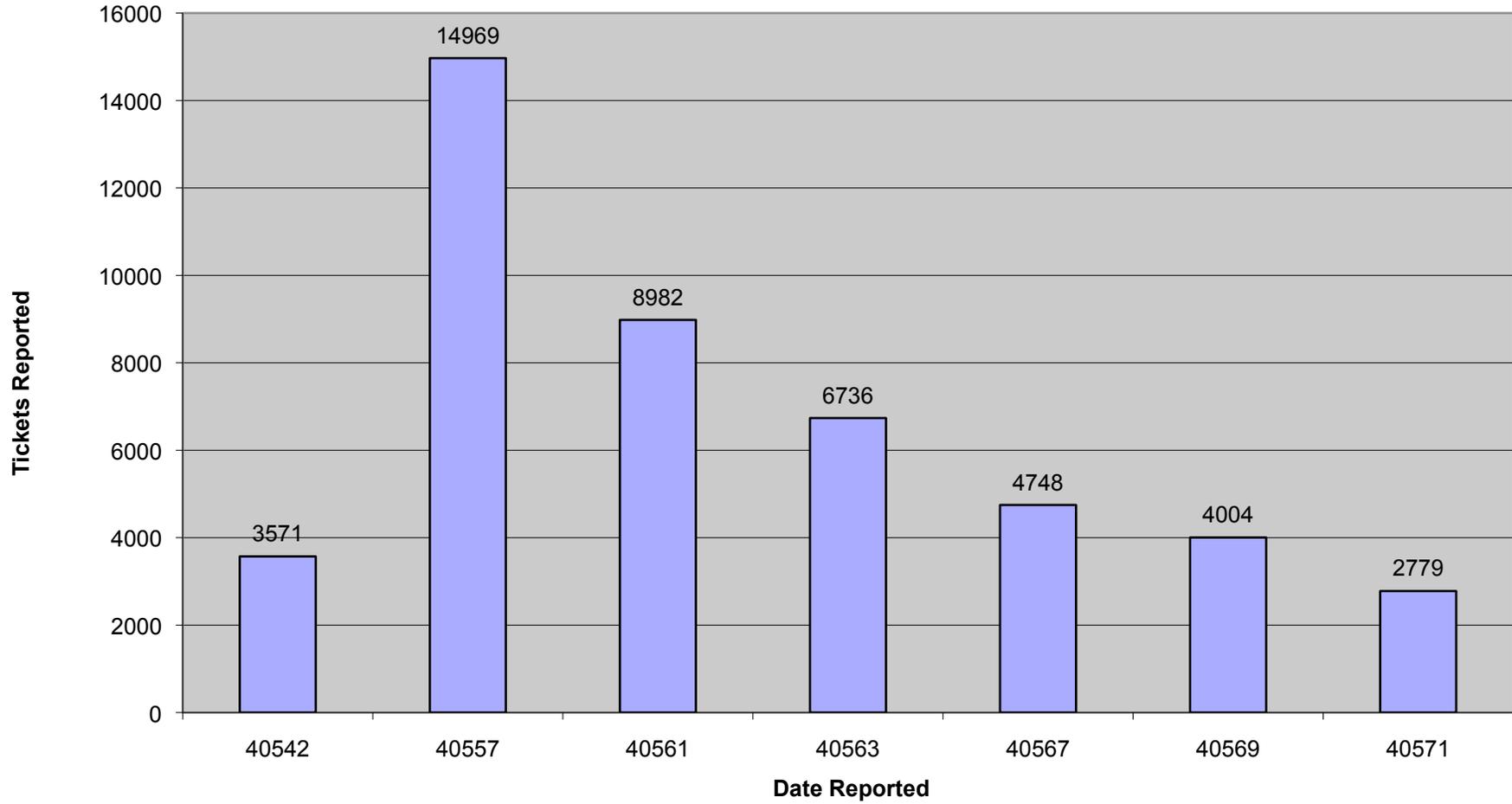
Note: the state declared Los Angeles County a disaster area but the federal government did not.

AT&T Statewide Maintenance Load



Verizon Statewide Trouble Tickets

Statewide Trouble Tickets



Out of Service Repair Time 2010 Monthly Reports for AT&T and Verizon*

**General Order 133-C Standard:
90% of customers should have service restored within 24 hours**

AT&T**	1st Quarter			2nd Quarter			3rd Quarter		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Total # of outage report tickets	97,582	81,124	71,933	61,260	55,337	56,389	57,777	59,719	55,178
Total # of repair tickets restored in ≤ 24 hrs.	49,508	32,639	38,385	23,819	18,910	18,426	18,483	32,261	41,695
% of repair tickets restored ≤ 24 hrs.	50.73%	40.23%	53.36%	38.88%	34.17%	32.68%	31.99%	54.02%	75.56%

Verizon**	1st Quarter			2nd Quarter			3rd Quarter		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Total # of outage report tickets	22,949	20,156	22,249	16,111	13,650	14,240	14,450	14,196	13,115
Total # of repair tickets restored in ≤ 24 hrs.	17,781	17,961	15,412	12,751	11,627	11,055	10,271	11,819	10,629
% of repair tickets restored ≤ 24 hrs.	77.48%	89.11%	69.27%	79.14%	85.18%	77.63%	71.08%	83.26%	81.04%

*Monthly data reported to the CPUC for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters of 2010 as required by General Order 133-C and CPUC decision D.09-07-019, with exclusions for Sundays and federal holidays, delays due to customer requested appointments, and delays due to circumstances beyond the carrier's control such as catastrophic events (a state of emergency declared by a federal or state authority) or widespread service outage (an outage affecting at least 3% of a carrier's customers in the state).

**The data presented is as reported by the companies with the calculation of exclusions according to the companies' interpretation of GO 133-C and D. 09-07-019. CPUC staff report that they have been in ongoing discussions with AT&T regarding whether the manner in which AT&T reports the data and calculates exclusions complies with GO 133-C.



Powered by Clickability

Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Inside Recent Phone Outages

By [JOEL GROVER](#) and [MATT GOLDBERG](#)

Updated 6:59 AM PST, Thu, Jan 13, 2011



To view this video you must to have Flash Player 9.0 or later installed. [Click to download the most recent version of Flash.](#)

Phone company insiders tell NBCLA that [AT&T](#) hasn't told customers the whole story, of why there have been massive outages of landline phone service since December's heavy rains.

Thousands of homes and businesses, who get their landline service from AT&T and [Verizon](#), are still waiting for service to be restored.

Six AT&T technicians, from different parts of the region, told NBCLA that part of the reason for the massive outages lies beneath the streets of [Southern California](#). Underground, you'll find miles and miles of aging phone cable installed decades ago, which is still used by Verizon and AT&T, to bring a dial tone to your home or business.

These aging lines are called "pulp cable," because they're so old, they're insulated

with old-fashioned paper.

"If they get wet, the paper gets wet and they short out," says an AT&T technician, who asked us not to use his name for fear of losing his job.

All six AT&T techs who contacted NBCLA, tell us the recent outages are due partly to an old network of decaying phone cables and wires, that they say, the company should've replaced years ago.

"AT&T's infrastructure is in very poor, to horrible condition," says one AT&T technician.

ATT says its network of cables and wires and boxes that provide landline phone service, works almost all of the time.

"99.99 percent of the time this network operates virtually flawlessly. There are problems, there are issues," says [John Britton](#), AT&T's spokesman.

Those problems arise when there are heavy rains, like we had in December, which knocked out phone service to homes and businesses across Southern California.

Elizabeth and [Tim Bennett](#) lost phone service at their Winnetka home before Christmas, and were told it would be three weeks to get it fixed. "That's insane, absolutely insane," said Tim Bennett.

When NBCLA questioned AT&T about the Bennett's three-week wait to get their phone line fixed, the company immediately sent a technician to fix their phone. But many other AT&T and Verizon landline customers have been told it will be up to a month until their service is restored.

The long wait for repairs, insiders say, is because AT&T has been cutting the workforce that repairs landlines.

In fact a document NBCLA obtained from the California Public Utilities Commission, shows that AT&T cut its total landline workforce 61%, from 1991 to 2008.

Says an AT&T technician, "You can't go out and be honest with the customer and say, 'the reason you waited 25 days or two weeks or 14 days, is because the company doesn't have enough personnel.'"

AT&T explains the workforce numbers a different way. Britton says, "I actually have more technicians now than I did in 2005."

NBCLA asked him if all those technicians were servicing landlines, and Britton replied, "They're servicing television too."

AT&T now provides TV and Internet to homes, and the company admits more

and more of its workforce is focusing on newer technologies.

Consumers groups say, the company just doesn't care much anymore about its landline business.

"They don't want to maintain that service, they want to put as little as possible into that service," says Regina Costa, a lawyer with The Utility Reform Network, a consumer watchdog group.

Verizon also admits its workforce that repairs landlines has been reduced in recent years.

But spokesman Jon Davies says, "The number of Verizon employees in California has decreased over time because of the greater efficiency we've seen as we've increased the use of fiber optics in our network."

But to restore landline service from the recent outages, Davies says Verizon has had to put technicians on overtime and bring in extra techs from outside of Southern California.

Both companies say they spend hundreds of millions of dollars on maintaining their network and infrastructure.

Everyone agrees that more and more people are relying on their cell phones to communicate. But keep in mind, 70% of Southern California homes still have landlines, and many of those homes will depend on those lines for years to come.

Do you have more information about this story? Do you have another story for us to investigate? Email: Joel.Grover@NBCUNI.com

Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

First Published: Jan 12, 2011 6:11 PM PST

Find this article at:

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local-beat/Inside-Recent-Phone-Outages-113427559.html>

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)



Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

From: "Sarah De Young" <deyoung@caltel.org>
Subject: **California Pole Attachment Proceeding**
Date: February 17, 2011 1:09:29 PM PST
To: <william.dever@fcc.gov>
Cc: <clay@deanhardtllaw.com>
▶ 1 Attachment, 3.6 KB

Hi Bill,

It was good meeting with you yesterday. I wanted to provide a link to the pending proceeding in California (Rulemaking 08-11-005) on pole fire safety in which pole loading and other pole attachment issues have been raised:

<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/published/proceedings/R0811005.htm>

Please let me know if you have questions or need additional information.

Sarah



Sarah DeYoung
Executive Director
CALTEL
925-465-4396
www.caltel.org