



October 24, 2013

Ex Parte Notice

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

Re: *Rural Call Completion, WC Docket No. 13-39*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Thursday, October 24, 2013, the undersigned, on behalf of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association (“NTCA”), spoke via telephone with Rebekah Goodheart, legal advisor to Acting Chairwoman Mignon Clyburn, to discuss matters in the above-referenced proceeding. We specifically talked about proposed rules to establish data collection obligations that would help track and resolve rural call completion problems.

NTCA reiterated its position that obtaining robust call completion reports from originating carriers and VoIP providers will help to set much-needed incentives for more proper management of underlying providers and thus better rates for completion of calls throughout communications markets generally. NTCA asserts that a near-term order requiring reports from originating carriers and VoIP providers would be a welcome and much-needed development, but even such an order must ultimately be paired with swift and effective enforcement based upon shortcomings flagged in that data as well as ongoing efforts to inject greater transparency into the opaque niches in which intermediate providers currently operate.

NTCA also continued to make clear its objection to any “safe harbors” that are not “earned” based upon a public data-driven showing that particular practices lead specifically to improved results in terms of call completion performance. While industry best practices and other network management initiatives *could* in theory lead to improved call completion rates, there is no record currently available to justify the adoption of particular safe harbors tied to such practices or initiatives. Similarly, to the extent the Commission provides parties with some ability to seek relief in the future from any reporting or retention obligations adopted via order, such relief should be available only upon a showing that the practices in question have in fact led to acceptable call completion rates that do not discriminate between rural and non-rural consumers.

Marlene H. Dortch

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Finally, NTCA noted its limited concurrence with recent *ex parte* communications by Verizon that, as long as reporting entities were required to submit aggregate information consistent with that proposed in Figure 1 of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and to retain detailed and sufficient data on the completion (or lack thereof) of individual calls to *rural* locations as indicated in such reports, there should be no need to retain months of data with respect to performance in the completion of individual *non-rural* calls.

Thank you for your attention to this correspondence. Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules, a copy of this letter is being filed via ECFS.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael R. Romano

Michael R. Romano

Senior Vice President – Policy

cc: Rebekah Goodheart