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January 13, 2014

VIA ECFS

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW, Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Notice of Ex Parte Presentation - AT&T Petition to Launch a Proceeding Concerning the TDM-to-IP Transition; Petition of the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association for a Rulemaking to Promote and Sustain the Ongoing TDM-to-IP Evolution, GN Docket No. 12-353; Technology Transitions Policy Task Force, GN Docket No. 13-5

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On January 10, 2014, Michael Shultz, Vice-President Regulatory of Consolidated Communications, Inc. (“Consolidated”), accompanied by Russell M. Blau and the undersigned of Bingham McCutchen LLP, representing Consolidated, met with Jonathan Sallet, interim director of the Technology Transitions Policy Task Force, Stephanie Weiner (OGC), and Jonathan Chambers (OSP) regarding the above matters.

Consolidated explained that it is currently the 10th largest Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (“ILEC”), and also operates as a Competitive Local Exchange Carrier (“CLEC”), both in areas contiguous to its ILEC operations and in other areas. As both an ILEC and a CLEC, it serves both residential and business customers and uses IP technology in some locations and TDM technology in others.

Consolidated urged that as it facilitates the transition to IP networks, the Commission should take steps to preserve competition. One issue that concerned Consolidated is what rules will govern exchange of traffic in IP. Consolidated expressed the view that the change in technology from TDM to IP did not eliminate the need for reasonable rules to preserve the benefits of competition

Consolidated also expressed its concerns about two aspects of AT&T’s proposed trials. First, Consolidated observed that AT&T’s proposed trials may interfere with Consolidated’s ability to continue to serve its customers in those locations in which it purchases wholesale inputs from the ILEC, as there was no apparent provision in AT&T’s proposal to ensure that wholesale customers such as Consolidated can continue

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to purchase wholesale service from the ILEC during or after the trial on reasonable rates, terms and conditions.

Second, Consolidated noted that AT&T and Verizon both seemed to be pointing the Commission towards trials in which exchange of IP traffic would be left to “free market” negotiations in which one party would have far more bargaining leverage. Consolidated suggested that the need for reasonable terms for traffic exchange did not depend on the technology used to switch the traffic.

Consolidated also provided the attendees with a copy of the attached presentation

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Eric J. Branfman

Eric J. Branfman

Counsel for Consolidated Communications, Inc.

cc: Jonathan Sallet (via email)
Stephanie Weiner (via email)
Jonathan Chambers (via email)

Attachment