

**BEFORE THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON D.C. 20554**

In the matter of:

Verizon Wireless' Petition Pursuant to)	
47 U.S.C. § 160 for Partial Forbearance)	CC Docket No. 99-200
From the Commercial Mobile Radio Services)	
Number Portability Obligation.)	WT Docket No. 01-184
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**COMMENTS OF THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION ON THE VERIZON WIRELESS PETITION FOR
LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY FORBEARANCE**

Pursuant to the Federal Communication Commission's ("FCC") procedural schedule established in the above docket, the Michigan Public Service Commission ("MPSC") hereby submits its comments.

I. INTRODUCTION.

On August 7, 2001, the FCC requested comments regarding Verizon Wireless' Petition for Partial Forbearance from the Local Number Portability ("LNP") requirement currently scheduled for November 24, 2002.¹ Although Verizon Wireless does not request forbearance from Thousands-Block Number Pooling ("number pooling"), LNP is considered a technical cornerstone for implementation of pooling.

In the Numbering Resource Optimization Report and Order, the FCC concluded that when commercial mobile radio service (CMRS) carriers become LNP-capable, they will be "equally subject to any thousands-block number pooling requirements we adopt for LNP-capable wireline carriers."² In addition, the FCC has determined that "certain important number

¹ Verizon Wireless, Forbearance Petition, FCC WT Docket 01-184, July 26, 2001.

² Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making, Numbering Resource Optimization, CC Docket 99-200 (FCC 00-104), March 31, 2000, ¶ 134.

optimization strategies, including number pooling, are based on existing LNP architecture.”³

II. DISCUSSION.

The issue of LNP capability for wireless carriers has been debated for many years, in several arenas: competition, thousands-block number pooling capability, and number conservation efforts. Several FCC dockets have been the forum for the determination of an adequate time period for CMRS service providers to become prepared for LNP technology.⁴

On August 23, 2001, the MPSC received delegated authority from the FCC to initiate number pooling in two of Michigan’s largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSA), Detroit and Grand Rapids.⁵ Both MSAs are experiencing a high level of demand for numbering resources, especially those related to cellular and personal communication services (PCS). Several of Michigan’s largest rate centers have nearly 50% of their numbering resources dedicated to cellular telephone and PCS companies.

Granting the permanent forbearance, requested by Verizon Wireless, would severely limit the effectiveness of pooling in Michigan and increase the need to implement additional area code relief plans in this state, shortening the time between area code changes. Although Michigan plans to initiate number pooling as soon as possible, the benefits of number pooling will, at a minimum, be significantly reduced until the expiration of the current forbearance order on November 24, 2002.⁶ If the instant petition is granted, the benefits of number pooling will continue to be diminished after that date.

³ Memorandum Opinion and Order, FCC WT docket No. 98-229, ¶ 2.

⁴ WT Docket 98-229 (FCC 99-19), FCC 99-200 (00-104), FCC 99-200 (00-429).

⁵ In the Matter of Numbering Resource Optimization, MPSC Petition for Additional Delegated Authority, CC Docket 99-200, DA 01-2013 (NSD-L-01-36), August 23, 2001.

⁶ CTIA Petition for Forbearance From CMRS Number Portability Obligations, WT Docket 98-229, February 8, 1999.

Although Verizon Wireless proposes that “an inability of customers to retain phone numbers has not deterred competition,”⁷ the MPSC believes that LNP capability for all carriers will encourage more competition in the marketplace. Customers will be able to change service providers without having their existing telephone number, wireless or wireline, changed; thus, providing convenience and more competitive contracts.

An additional concern of the MPSC lies with the inability of non-LNP capable carriers to participate in number conservation measures, such as unassigned number porting (UNP) and individual number porting (INP). The North American Numbering Council (NANC) has identified these number conservation efforts, as contributing factors, to assist in retaining the current 10-digit numbering system versus a potential expansion to a 12 or 13-digit numbering system. A permanent forbearance of CMRS service providers from LNP capability may render any form of conservation ineffective.

⁷ Verizon Wireless Petition for Partial Forbearance, WT-01-184, July 16, 2001, pg. 3.

III. CONCLUSION.

The MPSC requests that the FCC maintain the November 24, 2002 deadline for LNP capability for CMRS service providers in the top 100 MSAs, in an effort to encourage competition between wireline and wireless service providers, improve conservation of the current North American Number Plan, and increase the benefits of thousands-block number pooling currently underway in many states. Accordingly, the MPSC respectfully requests that the FCC deny Verizon Wireless' Petition for Partial Forbearance from the CMRS Number Portability Obligation.

Respectfully submitted,

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