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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Investigation to Address
Intrastate Rural Call Completion Issues.

Investigation 14-05-012
(Filed May 15, 2014)

**ASSIGNED COMMISSIONER’S RULING REQUESTING PARTY AND PUBLIC
COMMENTS REGARDING ISSUES RAISED AT THE SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HEARING AND WORKSHOP**

In Investigation (I.) 14-05-012, the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) requests comments regarding issues raised at the Santa Cruz, California Public Participation Hearing and Workshop that was held on September 20, 2016. Parties and the public may comment on the Workshop Report (*i.e.* the Reporter’s Transcript), the issues that were raised at the Workshop, and make suggestions about what Commission action is needed to address the issues raised. The Workshop Report is available on the Commission’s website in the proceeding’s docket card and is made part of this proceeding’s record.

Please use the following questions as a guide in helping you focus the content of your comments. Through a previous ACR, parties were directed to file comments on the themes listed in part I below, and those themes were discussed at the September 20 workshop. Parties need not reiterate their previously filed comments, and should file only additional comments in response to the workshop and its agenda.

**I. Call Completion Party and Respondent and Public
Discussion of Themes Raised Regarding Commission
Action in Call Completion Workshops and Public
Participation Hearings**

1. *Monitoring Call Completion Failures:* Should the Commission establish a real-time reporting system for call completion failures within California?
2. *False Disconnected Messages:* At Eureka, we received reports of some callers receiving false messages that the called number had been disconnected or was not in service. The ACR of September 8th asked responding carriers to report on this at today's Hearing. How widespread is this problem? What steps should the Commission take to address these falsely announced call completion failures? At the September 20, 2016 meeting one carrier reported that they believed a call from the Hoopa Temporary Assistance from Needy Families (TANF) Office was placed in Trinity County, when, in fact, the Hoopa TANF Office is located in Humboldt County. Communications Division has issued a data request to carriers to ask them to investigate routing and other technical issues that may be associated with misidentifying the location of a call. Today, 2-1-1 calls are only recognized within a county that supports 2-1-1. What additional steps should the Commission take to ensure that carriers appropriately recognize the location and county from which calls are placed so they are properly routed to 2-1-1 or other numbers? Callers placing calls from a business network that may require dialing 9 or another number to get an outside line may have difficulties reaching 2-1-1 or other short codes if the business network system is not programmed to allow callers to reach the short code number. Calls from the Yurok reservation office near Weitchpec, California, yielded a fast busy when dialing 2-1-1 or 9-2-1-1, or 9-1-2-1-1. What steps should the Commission take to ensure that business network operators are informed about the steps they can take to enable callers to reach 2-1-1 or other short codes such as 8-1-1 (call before you dig), as well as 9-1-1, and that carriers take steps to enable such calls?
3. *Inability to place collect calls over VoIP-based phone services:* Discuss information about this issue. What steps

should the Commission take to gather information about the ability to place collect calls regardless of technology?

4. *Pole and Line Safety*: How should the Commission address concerns about pole overloading, leaning poles, low and dangling wires, wires attached to trees (dead and alive, near pest infested trees or in areas of high fire danger), poles bearing the weight of vegetation? What actions should the Commission take to address these issues and their effect on call completion, 9-1-1 and dial tone access?
5. *Dial tone and emergency 9-1-1 access issues*:
 - a. *Reporting*: Should 9-1-1 or dial outages be promptly reported to Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), local public safety officials, and the CPUC? Should outages be reported to the public? How widespread and lengthy should the outage be before the reporting is required? Should reporting requirements vary by area, e.g. rural vs. urban?
 - b. *Emergency Response*: Construction of the connection to support a Cell-on-Wheels (COW) or a Cell on Light Trucks (COLT) may take several days or more than a week. How should the Commission address 9-1-1, dial tone, and emergency service access issues including for first responders, and public safety officials? What steps should the Commission take to facilitate communications access for first responders and public safety officials during an emergency response and recovery?
 - c. *Emergency Telephone Notification System (ETNS)*: How can the Commission assure that public safety officials have timely access to ETNS databases used to inform residents about evacuations and other safety steps during emergencies?
 - d. *Accurate Address Database*: At the Middletown PPH, several speakers stated that the ETNS database did not identify their household when they called

9-1-1 due to differences between the tribal address system and that used in the ETNS database. What steps should the Commission take to assure that the ETNS database is populated with accurate addresses, including in Tribal areas? Are additional steps needed to ensure ETNS resiliency?

- e. *Network Resiliency, route diversity and redundancy:* What steps should the Commission take to assure that an outage in one area of the local network does not bring down the network region-wide? What steps should the Commission take to promote resiliency, safety, and reliability for 9-1-1 and dial tone access for the public, safety officials, and first responders?
 - f. *Telephone Company Emergency Contract information for Public Safety Officials:* Lake County emergency services officials at the Middletown Call Completion PPH reported they were only given the generic customer service line to report a downed pole. What steps should the Commission take to ensure that Public Safety Officials, including counties, tribes, first responders, city, county and state emergency services operators, have direct access to Communications companies to report emergency issues such as a down wire or pole or other emergency issue?
6. *Software Driven Outages:* At the June 1 and June 27 Workshops the parties discussed what Frontier reported were software driven outages after the transition from Verizon to Frontier. Representatives of Frontier reported that dial tone and 9-1-1 outages in April and May 2016 affected VoIP customers who had subscribed to Verizon and were attributed to corrupt data, data issues that resolved themselves in the Verizon database, but not in the Frontier database, and mislabeling of network terminals at customer locations that hampered communication to the terminals to correct the data signal. What additional steps should

the Commission take regarding the Frontier outages of April-May 2016? Did the Frontier outages violate Commission rules and if so which ones, and what should the Commission do in response? Did the Frontier outages following the Verizon transition reflect any non-compliance by either Frontier or Verizon with the Commission's order approving the transaction, including the settlements? What reporting, coordination, or other steps should be required to identify and address software-driven outages affecting dial tone and access to PSAPs by residential, business and public safety during emergencies? What lessons from the transition issues might the Commission apply to the consideration of other transfer or merger applications?

7. *Service Issues:* At the June 1 and June 27 Workshops Frontier reported that actions by its call center based outside the United States contributed to the delay in resolving customer out of service and other complaints. What actions should the Commission take to address the actions regarding Frontier's call center and the role it played in delaying restoration of customer service or knowledge of customer problems? What lessons from the call center difficulties with Frontier might the Commission apply to other companies?
8. *Customer Reporting Tools:* What actions should the Commission take to facilitate customer reporting of dial tone and 9-1-1 outages to the Commission, to carriers, and to any other relevant agencies including local PSAPs? Would a web portal that allows reporting of outages, restoration that takes over 24 hours, pole and wire conditions, and other issues of non-conformity to Commission rules help address these issues and promote safe and reliable service? What other issues have parties or the public experienced in getting outages or 9-1-1 access, call completion issues, or false disconnected/out of service messages resolved? What should the Commission do about these issues?

9. *Other issues:* Are there other call completion and 9-1-1 dial tone access issues parties or the public would like to bring to the attention of the Commission?

II. Questions from Public Participation Hearings

1. Have you experienced instances where you believe calls placed to your phone number have failed? If so, how did you learn of these instances?
2. When did those call failures occur, and have they continued?
3. Are there businesses, non-profits, public agencies, or residents in your area that have been impacted by call failures and outages? If so explain when and how.
4. Have there been instances of businesses, non-profits, public agencies, or residents learning that when people tried to call, they received a message that stated that your number has been discontinued or is not in service, when in fact it was in service?
5. Have you reported call completion failures when they have become known to you, and, if so, to whom?
6. Have you experienced dial tone or 9-1-1 outages? Of what duration have been the outages and what kind of facilities and services were involved? Wireline? Wireless? Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)? Access to 9-1-1? Police? Fire? Other?
7. What companies have been involved in the outages, call completion failures, or false disconnected messages you experienced in California? Have you ever been unable to reach 9-1-1 in an emergency? Unable to reach other emergency services? How long were you unable to access 9-1-1 or otherwise out of service?
8. For those experiencing phone problems following the transition from Verizon to Frontier, have those problems lessened or stopped? If not, what problems with your telephone service still exist that didn't before the transition?

9. What other communications issues about your ability to place and receive calls would you like to bring to the Commission's attention?

IT IS RULED that any party or member of the public who wishes to present comments authorized by this ruling, shall file and serve their comments by October 7, 2016.

Dated September 27, 2016, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ CATHERINE J.K. SANDOVAL
Catherine J.K. Sandoval
Assigned Commissioner