

PUBLIC NOTICE

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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FCC OVERSIGHT TEAM CREATED TO MONITOR COMPLIANCE WITH CALLS ORDER

Released: July 13, 2000

The Commission staff has established a team composed of members of the Common Carrier Bureau, the Consumer Information Bureau, and the Enforcement Bureau to monitor compliance with the Commission's recent order on the Coalition for Affordable Local and Long Distance Services access charge proposal. (CALLS order)

The oversight team will actively monitor local and long distance telephone companies' compliance with the terms of the order and will also serve as a point of contact for interested parties to report any perceived instances of possible noncompliance. This informal process will enable the Commission to assist parties in quickly resolving any disputes. Finally, the team will recommend appropriate enforcement action for any noncompliance with the order.

On May 31, 2000, the Commission issued an order reducing telephone access charges paid by long distance companies by \$3.2 billion. *See* http://www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/News_Releases/2000/nrcc0029.html. Access charges are the prices long distance companies pay to local telephone companies for access to their local phone network. Two major long distance companies, AT&T and Sprint, committed to passing through these reductions to consumers. In response to concerns that only high-volume consumers might see the savings, AT&T agreed to eliminate from its basic rate plans the monthly minimum usage charges consumers were previously required to pay, and Sprint agreed not to introduce a minimum charge for basic rate customers.

In addition, two charges, the presubscribed interexchange carrier charge, which in the past appeared on consumers' long distance bills, and the subscriber line charge, are to be combined into one line item on consumers' local phone bills. For the first year, the new single charge is lower than the previous two charges combined.

The rules also continue to preserve the FCC's commitment to ensuring that companies continue to have the financial support needed to offer phone service in areas that are expensive to serve. Under the new rules, \$650 million is removed from access charges

and replaced with an assessment on all carriers' interstate revenues. The money collected will be placed in a fund available to local telephone companies serving customers in high-cost areas. This universal service fund helps ensure that customers in those high-cost areas continue to receive telephone service at affordable prices, even as access charges collected from long distance carriers are reduced.

The team leaders are Jane Jackson of the Common Carrier Bureau, Lorraine Miller of the Consumer Information Bureau, and Suzanne Tetreault of the Enforcement Bureau. Ms. Jackson, Ms. Miller, and Ms. Tetreault can be contacted by phone at (202) 418-1520, (202) 418-1400, and (202) 418-7450, respectively. They can also be contacted by U.S. mail at the address listed above with copies to the Chiefs of the Common Carrier, Consumer Information, and Enforcement Bureaus.

News media contacts: Michael Balmoris, CCB at (202) 418-0253 or John Winston, EB at (202) 418-7450.

By the Chiefs, Common Carrier Bureau, Consumer Information Bureau, and Enforcement Bureau

