



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

News media information 202 / 418-0500
Fax-On-Demand 202 / 418-2830
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
<ftp.fcc.gov>

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DA 01-554

**INTERNATIONAL BUREAU
SEEKS COMMENT ON A PROPOSAL
BY CITY OF LAREDO, TEXAS, AND CITY OF NUEVO LAREDO, MEXICO,
TO CREATE A CROSS-BORDER LOCAL CALLING AREA**

Comment date: April 16, 2001

Reply Comment date: April 30, 2001

On November 30, 2000, the City Manager of the City of Laredo, Texas filed with the Commission a copy of a “*Collaborative Agreement Between the Municipality of Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas (Mexico) and the City of Laredo, Texas (USA)*”. The *Collaborative Agreement* proposed that U.S. and Mexican authorities create a local calling area, straddling the border between the United States and Mexico, that encompasses both cities.

Laredo and Nuevo Laredo are located directly opposite each other on the Rio Grande, on either side of the border between the United States and Mexico. The two cities have extensive social and economic ties that generate substantial communications across the border. Because telephone calls between them are international calls, the cost of such calls is substantially higher than would be the case between two similarly situated cities within the United States. The proposed arrangement would permit a flat-rate charge for unlimited calls between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo. The agreement, however, does not make any proposal with respect to how such a cross-border local calling area might be effectuated.

We seek comment on the *Collaborative Agreement* and its proposed cross-border calling area. Specifically, we request that commenters discuss the benefits that such a calling area may offer, as well as any concerns it could cause. We also request respondents to comment on how such a calling area could be effectuated. In this regard, commenters are asked to discuss the legal basis and regulatory and/or commercial structure that could create a *de jure* or *de facto* local calling area and the role, if any, that government agencies of the United States and Mexico would have in effectuating such a result. We would welcome comments on any alternatives to the creation of a *de jure* cross-border local calling area that could achieve the objective of substantially reducing the charges for calls between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo.

In commenting on the “*Collaborative Agreement*,” respondents should review the letter from the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Texas (PUCT), dated May 31, 2000, that announced a public meeting the PUCT held in Laredo on June 6, 2000. The purpose of the meeting was to receive public comment on a proposal before it to create “toll-free Extended Area Calling between Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.” In the letter the PUCT noted that

the proposed calling area would require cooperation by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, other local exchange carriers in Laredo, and Telex. The PUCT noted that it views the proposal as a “first pilot program” for similar cross-border agreements. Commenters are invited to address the PUCT’s suggestion that the creation of this calling area serve as a pilot program for other such agreements.

Interested parties may file comments responding to this notice on or before **April 16, 2001**, and reply comments on or before **April 30, 2001**. All comments should reference **DA No. 01-554**.

Interested parties should file an original and one copy with the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, S.W., TW-A325, Washington, D.C. 20554. A copy of each filing should be sent to the Office of Public Affairs, Reference Division, 445 12th Street, S.W., room CY-A257, Washington, D.C., 20554. In addition, parties should send two copies to John Copes, 445 12th Street, room 6-C847, Washington, D.C. 2054.

Copies of the “*Collaborative Agreement Between the Municipality of Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas (Mexico) and the City of Laredo, Texas (USA)*” the letter from the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Texas (PUCT), dated May 31, 2000, and any subsequently filed documents in this matter are available for inspection and duplication during regular business hours in the FCC Office of Public Affairs and Information Center, 445 12th Street, S.W., room CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554. Copies may also be obtained from ITS, 445 12th Street, S.W., room CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554, tel. +1 (202) 857-3800.

This is a “permit but disclose” proceeding for the purposes of the Commission’s *ex parte* rules. See generally 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1200-1.1216. As a “permit but disclose” proceeding, *ex parte* presentations will be governed by the procedures set forth in section 1.1206 of the Commission’s rules applicable to non-restricted proceedings, 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206. Parties making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentations must contain a summary of the substance of the presentation and not merely a listing of the subjects discussed. More than one or two sentence description of the views and arguments presented is generally required. See 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206 (b)(2). Other rules pertaining to oral and written presentations are set forth in section 1.1206(b) as well.

For further information, contact John Copes, Telecommunications Division, International Bureau, tel. (202) 418-1478; TTY 418-2555; e-mail: jcopes@fcc.gov.