

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)
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Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization) WC Docket No. 11-42
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ORDER

Adopted: June 25, 2021

Released: June 25, 2021

Comment Date: August 2, 2021
Reply Comment Date: August 17, 2021

By the Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau:

1. By this Order, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) grants a 31-day extension of time for filing comments and reply comments on the Public Notice¹ seeking to refresh the record in the above-captioned Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization proceeding. With this extension, comments are due on August 2, 2021 (adjusted for August 1, 2021, falling on a Sunday), and reply comments are due on August 17, 2021.

2. On June 1, 2021, the Bureau released a Public Notice seeking to refresh the record on a petition for reconsideration filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA),² which sought reconsideration of several changes implemented in the *2016 Lifeline Order*,³ including the phasedown of voice-only support. The Public Notice required that comments be submitted by July 1, 2021, and reply comments be submitted by July 16, 2021.

3. On June 23, 2021, NASUCA filed a motion to extend the comment deadline to August 30, 2021, and the reply comment deadline to September 14, 2021.⁴ NASUCA asserts that, given the length of time, an extension is warranted to ensure sufficient time to conduct consultations with respective members and to prepare reasoned comments that meaningfully address the issues presented.⁵ NASUCA

¹ *Wireline Competition Bureau Seeks to Refresh the Record on a Petition for Reconsideration Filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates*, Public Notice, DA 21-641 (WCB June 1, 2021).

² Petition of NASUCA for Reconsideration, WC Docket No. 11-42 (filed June 23, 2016), https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/1062324901351/WC%2011_42_NASUCA_Pet_for_Recon_Final.pdf (Petition for Reconsideration).

³ *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, WC Docket No. 11-42, Third Report and Order, Further Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration, 31 FCC Rcd 3962 (2016) (*2016 Lifeline Order*).

⁴ Motion for Extension of Time, WC Docket No. 11-42 (filed June 23, 2021), [https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/1062335666328/Motion%20for%20Extension%20-%20NASUCA%20-%20WC%2011-42%20\(final\).pdf](https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/1062335666328/Motion%20for%20Extension%20-%20NASUCA%20-%20WC%2011-42%20(final).pdf) (Extension Request).

⁵ Extension Request at 3.

further asserts that the temporal difficulties are compounded by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, a mid-year meeting held in June, the loss of several NASUCA member office personnel who worked on the petition for reconsideration, and the difficulty in retaining a consultant that could produce a detailed and descriptive factual affidavit regarding the situational changes in the industry since the *2016 Lifeline Order*.⁶

4. As set forth in section 1.46 of the Commission's rules,⁷ it is the policy of the Commission that extensions of time shall not be routinely granted. The deadlines stated in the Public Notice provided interested parties a month to submit comments, and an additional two weeks for reply comments. Nevertheless, we find that NASUCA has shown good cause for an extension of the comment cycle, and that the public interest will be served by extending the comment and reply deadlines. NASUCA asserts that the COVID-19 pandemic and passage of time has created additional difficulties—such as, retaining a consultant—in preparing meaningful responses to the issues presented. While we find that an extension of the comment deadlines is warranted, we believe that an additional month is more appropriate than the requested two months proposed by NASUCA.⁸ We note that of the issues raised in NASUCA's original petition, the phasedown in Lifeline voice-only support is particularly timely, as voice-only support is scheduled to end in most areas on December 1, 2021.⁹ This approach will offer more time to interested stakeholders while also ensuring the Commission has time to consider such comments before the phasedown is completed on December 1, 2021.

5. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to sections 0.204, 0.291, and 1.46 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.204, 0.291, 1.46, that the Motion for Extension of Time filed by Requestors on June 23, 2021 is GRANTED to the extent described herein.

6. IT IS ALSO ORDERED that the date for filing comments on the Public Notice is EXTENDED to August 2, 2021, and the date for filing reply comments is EXTENDED to August 16, 2021.

7. To request materials in accessible formats (such as Braille, large print, electronic files, or audio format), send an e-mail to: fcc504@fcc.gov, or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice) or (202) 418-0432 (TTY).

8. For further information concerning this proceeding, please contact Nicholas Page, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau at Nicholas.Page@fcc.gov.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Kris Anne Monteith
Chief
Wireline Competition Bureau

⁶ *Id.* at 3-4.

⁷ 47 CFR § 1.46.

⁸ Extension Waiver at 4.

⁹ See Petition for Reconsideration at 3-4; see also *2016 Lifeline Order* at 3962, para. 117; 47 CFR § 54.403(a)(2)(iv).