



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU PERFORMS REQUIRED EVALUATION PURSUANT TO SECTION 64.6304(F) OF THE COMMISSION'S RULES

WC Docket No. 17-97

Section 64.6304(f) of the Commission's rules requires that the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau), "in conjunction with an assessment of burdens and barriers to implementation of caller identification authentication technology, annually review the scope" of all STIR/SHAKEN implementation extensions previously granted by the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) pursuant to the Pallone-Thune Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act.¹ In this Public Notice, the Bureau reevaluates the two remaining STIR/SHAKEN implementation extensions granted by the Commission on the basis of undue hardship—the facilities-based small voice service provider extension and the extension for voice service providers that cannot obtain the Service Provider Code (SPC)—and finds that they do not require revision.

Accordingly, the extension for facilities-based small voice service providers will lapse on June 30, 2023, marking a significant step toward the Commission's goal of achieving ubiquitous STIR/SHAKEN implementation.² After that date, all voice service providers with control over the network infrastructure necessary to implement STIR/SHAKEN³ will be required to do so unless they are one of the limited number of providers unable to obtain an SPC token, as discussed below. While there is still work to be done to ensure that caller ID information for all calls is authenticated, requiring this last

¹ 47 CFR § 64.6304(f); *see also* Pallone-Thune Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act, Pub. L. No. 116-105, § 4(b)(5)(F), 133 Stat. 3274, 3279 (2019) (codified in 47 U.S.C. § 227b) (TRACED Act); *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Second Report and Order, 36 FCC Rcd 1859, 1896-97, paras. 71-73 (2020) (*Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*).

² The TRACED Act directs the Commission to "enable as promptly as reasonable full participation of all classes of providers of voice service" in the STIR/SHAKEN framework, and to report on when it expects to achieve the goal of full participation. TRACED Act § 4(b)(5)(D), (F); *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1880-81, para. 45 (noting that the Commission's "guiding principle" in setting the small voice service provider implementation deadline was to "achieve ubiquitous STIR/SHAKEN implementation . . . as quickly as possible").

³ Providers that lack control over the facilities necessary to implement STIR/SHAKEN do not have an implementation obligation. *See Call Authentication Trust Anchor, Implementation of TRACED Act Section 6(a) Knowledge of Customers by Entities with Access to Numbering Resources*, WC Docket Nos. 17-97 and 20-67, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 35 FCC Rcd 3241, 3260, para. 40 (2020) (*First Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*). Further, pursuant to section 4(b)(5)(B) of the TRACED Act, voice service providers have an ongoing extension for the parts their networks that rely on technology that cannot initiate, maintain, and terminate SIP calls. *See* TRACED Act § 4(b)(5)(B); *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1892-96, paras. 66-70; 47 CFR § 64.6304(d).

batch of voice service providers that are capable of implementing STIR/SHAKEN to do so within the next six months will extend a critical protection for consumers against illegal spoofing without increasing burdens for providers.

I. BACKGROUND

The STIR/SHAKEN caller ID authentication framework protects consumers from illegally spoofed robocalls by allowing voice service providers to verify that the caller ID information transmitted with a call matches the caller's number.⁴ Pursuant to the TRACED Act, the Commission required voice service providers to fully implement STIR/SHAKEN in the IP portions of their networks by June 30, 2021.⁵ The TRACED Act also directed the Commission to assess burdens or barriers to the implementation of STIR/SHAKEN,⁶ however, and granted the Commission discretion to extend the implementation deadline for a "reasonable period of time" based upon a "public finding of undue hardship."⁷ In the *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, the Commission assessed the burdens or barriers to STIR/SHAKEN implementation and granted three categorical implementation extensions on the basis of undue hardship to: (1) small voice providers with 100,000 or fewer voice subscriber lines; (2) voice service providers that are unable to obtain an SPC token due to the Governance Authority's token policy; and (3) services scheduled for section 214 discontinuance.⁸

The TRACED Act further requires the Commission to assess burdens and barriers to implementation "as appropriate" after its initial assessment,⁹ and directs the Commission to, "not less frequently than annually after the first [extension] is granted," reevaluate and potentially revise any extension granted on the basis of undue hardship.¹⁰ It requires the Commission to issue a public notice addressing "why such [extension] remains necessary" and "when the Commission expects to achieve the goal of full participation" in caller ID authentication.¹¹ To comply with these TRACED Act obligations, the Commission directed the Bureau to annually assess the barriers to implementation and reevaluate the extensions granted for undue hardship, and to revise or extend them as necessary.¹² In so doing, the Commission permitted the Bureau to lengthen the extensions to which voice service providers are already subject, but prohibited it from terminating an extension prior to the extension's originally set end date,¹³ or granting extensions for any voice service providers or services that are not already subject to one.¹⁴ If the Bureau determines that a granted extension should be lengthened based on our assessment of burdens and barriers, we are permitted to decrease, but not expand, the scope of entities that are entitled to such an extension.¹⁵

⁴ See *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1861-62, paras. 3, 6.

⁵ TRACED Act § 4(b)(1)(A) (directing the Commission to require all voice service providers to implement STIR/SHAKEN in the IP portions of their networks no later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of the TRACED Act); 47 CFR § 64.6301; *First Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3252, para. 24.

⁶ TRACED Act § 4(b)(5)(A)(i).

⁷ *Id.* § 4(b)(5)(A)(ii).

⁸ See *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1877-83, paras. 40-51.

⁹ TRACED Act § 4(b)(5)(A)(i).

¹⁰ *Id.* § 4(b)(5)(F)(i).

¹¹ *Id.* § 4(b)(5)(F)(iii).

¹² *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1896, para. 71.

¹³ *Id.* at 1896, para. 72.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

In December 2021, the Bureau issued its first annual reevaluation of the Commission’s three granted STIR/SHAKEN implementation extensions¹⁶ and declined to modify any of them.¹⁷ The extension for services scheduled for section 214 discontinuance ended on June 30, 2022.¹⁸ On August 5, 2022, the Bureau released a Public Notice seeking comment for this second annual reevaluation of the two remaining STIR/SHAKEN implementation extensions¹⁹—for small voice service providers and for voice service providers unable to obtain the required token—granted based on undue hardship.²⁰

II. DISCUSSION

After reviewing the record for this second annual evaluation, we decline to extend the extension for facilities-based small voice service providers beyond June 30, 2023, and we decline to modify the extension for voice service providers that cannot obtain the SPC token required to participate in STIR/SHAKEN. There is no evidence in the record indicating that facilities-based small voice service providers face burdens that would prevent their implementation of STIR/SHAKEN within the next six months, in furtherance of the Commission’s objective to achieve ubiquitous STIR/SHAKEN implementation. While we conclude that the extension for voice service providers that cannot obtain an SPC token remains necessary, given that it is a prerequisite to participating in STIR/SHAKEN, the record

¹⁶ *Wireline Competition Bureau Reevaluates STIR/SHAKEN Extensions Pursuant to Section 4(b)(5) of the TRACED Act*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Public Notice, DA 21-1593 (WCB Dec. 16, 2021) (*Reevaluation of STIR/SHAKEN Extensions Public Notice*).

¹⁷ *Id.* at 2-4. The Bureau also declined to grant the request of the Satellite Industry Association (SIA) that small voice service providers, as a subset of small providers, receive an “indefinite” extension of the implementation deadline. *Id.* at 3. The Bureau sought comment on SIA’s request for this second annual reevaluation of STIR/SHAKEN implementation extensions, *Wireline Competition Bureau Seeks Comment on Two Periodic TRACED Act Obligations Regarding Caller ID Authentication*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Public Notice, DA 22-831, at 4 (WCB Aug. 5, 2022) (*TRACED Act Obligations Public Notice*), but no party addressed it in their comments to the Public Notice. We note, however, that the Commission has separately sought comment on whether the TRACED Act applies to some or all satellite providers and, if so, whether satellite providers or a subset should be granted a STIR/SHAKEN extension. See *Advanced Methods to Target and Eliminate Unlawful Robocalls, Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, CG Docket No. 17-59, WC Docket No. 17-97, Sixth Report and Order, Fifth Report and Order, Order on Reconsideration, Order, Seventh Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Fifth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 22-37, at 83-84, paras. 216-17 (May 20, 2022) (*Gateway Provider Order and Further Notice*). The comment period for that proceeding closed on September 16, 2022, with several commenters addressing the issue. See, e.g., ZipDX Comments, CG Docket No. 17-59, WC Docket No. 17-97, at 14-15 (rec. Aug. 17, 2022); YouMail, Inc. Comments, CG Docket No. 17-59, WC Docket No. 17-97, at 5 & n.10 (rec. Aug. 16, 2022); SIA Comments, CG Docket No. 17-59, WC Docket No. 17-97, at 4 (rec. Aug. 17, 2022); SIA Reply Comments, CG Docket No. 17-59, WC Docket No. 17-97, at 3 (rec. Sept. 16, 2022); ZipDX Reply Comments, CG Docket No. 17-59, WC Docket No. 17-97, at 7 (rec. Sept. 19, 2022). The arguments raised in those comments will be considered as part of that proceeding.

¹⁸ See 47 CFR § 64.6304(c).

¹⁹ The Bureau also sought comment for its first triennial assessment of the efficacy of STIR/SHAKEN call authentication framework as a tool in our work combating illegal robocalls, as required by section 4(b)(4) of the TRACED Act. *TRACED Act Obligations Public Notice* at 5-6. That matter is outside the scope of this Public Notice and will be separately addressed by the Bureau.

²⁰ *TRACED Act Obligations Public Notice* at 2-5. We did not seek comment on the implementation extension granted to voice service providers for the parts of their networks that rely on technology that cannot initiate, maintain, and terminate SIP calls because it was not granted on the basis of undue hardship, *TRACED Act Obligations Public Notice* at 2, n.7; TRACED Act § 4(b)(5)(F), and we do not address it further in this Public Notice. The Commission has, however, launched an inquiry into caller ID authentication technology for non-IP networks in separate proceedings. *Gateway Provider Order and Further Notice* at 67-68, para. 173; *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Notice of Inquiry, FCC 22-81 (Oct. 28, 2022) (*Non-IP Caller ID Authentication Notice of Inquiry*).

demonstrates that previous hurdles to obtaining the token have been removed, and thus the number of providers that require the extension should be few. Accordingly, we find that our decision to not revise either extension promotes full participation in STIR/SHAKEN.²¹

A. Small Voice Service Provider Extension.

In September 2020, the Commission granted a two-year extension for all small voice service providers, defined as “a provider that has 100,000 or fewer voice service subscriber lines.”²² Under this extension, small voice service providers were given until June 30, 2023, to implement STIR/SHAKEN. The Commission found that this extension was appropriate because small voice service providers may face substantial costs—in addition to resource constraints—to implement STIR/SHAKEN and confront unique equipment availability issues.²³ In December 2021, the Commission shortened the extension for a subset of small voice service providers likely to be the source of illegal robocalls.²⁴ It shortened the extension to one year—until June 30, 2022—for non-facilities-based small voice service providers based on overwhelming record support and available evidence showing that this subset of providers were originating a large and disproportionate amount of robocalls.²⁵ It also required small voice service providers suspected of originating illegal robocalls to implement STIR/SHAKEN on an accelerated timeline.²⁶ The Commission maintained the two-year extension for facilities-based small voice service providers because it found they were less likely to be the source of illegal robocalls.²⁷ When we considered this remaining extension in the 2021 annual reevaluation, we declined to lengthen it beyond June 30, 2023, noting that the Commission’s guiding principle in establishing the extension was “to achieve ubiquitous STIR/SHAKEN implementation to combat the scourge of illegal caller ID spoofing as quickly as possible.”²⁸

No party filed comments arguing that the extension should be extended or modified in any way. To the contrary, the parties that addressed this extension in their comments support requiring facilities-based small providers to implement STIR/SHAKEN by June 30, 2023, as planned.²⁹ There is no evidence in the record that new burdens or barriers to the implementation of STIR/SHAKEN have emerged for facilities-based small voice service providers since our annual reevaluation in December 2021. Rather, the record indicates that the Commission’s intent when granting the extension—to “drive down implementation costs” for small providers by allowing them to take advantage of a “more mature market for equipment and software solutions necessary to implement STIR/SHAKEN”³⁰—has been achieved.

²¹ See TRACED Act § 4(b)(5)(D).

²² 47 CFR § 64.6304(a); see also *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1877-82, paras. 40-48.

²³ *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1877, paras. 41-42. For instance, the Commission observed that small voice service providers relied on third-party vendor solutions to implement STIR/SHAKEN that may be prohibitively expensive. *Id.*

²⁴ See *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Fourth Report and Order, FCC 21-122, at 5, para. 9 (2021).

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ See *id.* at 8-9, 12, paras. 16-18, 23.

²⁸ *Reevaluation of STIR/SHAKEN Extensions Public Notice* at 2.

²⁹ See Transaction Network Services, Inc. (TNS) Comments at 2 (“The small voice provider extension should be allowed to expire as planned on June 30, 2023, to bring these providers within the STIR/SHAKEN call authentication framework.”); TransNexus Comments at 2 (“We believe that the small provider extension should end as planned on June 30, 2023.”).

³⁰ *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1880, para. 45.

As TransNexus states, “[s]everal STIR/SHAKEN solutions are available for small providers at modest cost.”³¹ Accordingly, the deadline for facilities-based small voice service providers to implement STIR/SHAKEN remains June 30, 2023. This conclusion of the implementation extension for small voice service providers will be a significant step toward achieving full participation in STIR/SHAKEN.

B. Extension for Voice Service Providers That Cannot Obtain a SPC Token.

To participate in STIR/SHAKEN, a voice service provider must obtain an SPC token issued through the STIR/SHAKEN governance system.³² The Commission granted voice service providers that are incapable of obtaining a SPC token due to Governance Authority policy an extension until they are capable of obtaining said token.³³ The Commission found that the extension was necessary because some voice service providers were unable to obtain a token and participation in STIR/SHAKEN without access to the required token was impossible.³⁴ In May 2021, the Governance Authority revised the STI-GA Token Access Policy to enable token access by some voice service providers previously unable to receive a token.³⁵ In the 2021 annual reevaluation, we found that this policy revision had resolved the main practical concern underlying this extension and that token access no longer stood as a significant barrier to full participation in STIR/SHAKEN.³⁶ We nonetheless declined to revise this extension on the basis that it remains necessary for the reason the Commission previously identified: “an entity that meets the definition of a provider of ‘voice service’ cannot comply with the STIR/SHAKEN rules if it is unable to receive a token.”³⁷

³¹ See TransNexus Comments at 2; TNS Comments at 1.

³² *Call Authentication Trust Anchor, Appeals of the STIR/SHAKEN Governance Authority Token Revocation Decisions*, WC Docket Nos. 17-97 and 21-291, Third Report and Order, 36 FCC Rcd 12878, 12879-81, paras. 4-6 (2021) (explaining the STIR/SHAKEN governance system and policy for obtaining SPC tokens) (*Third Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*). As the current Governance Authority, the Secure Telephone Identity Governance Authority defines the policies and procedures for the issuance and use of SPC tokens. See *First Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3246, para. 10; see also Secure Telephone Governance Authority, *STI Governance Authority*, <https://sti-ga.atis.org> (last visited Nov. 9, 2022).

³³ 47 CFR § 64.6304(b); *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1882-83, paras. 49-50. Recognizing that “a voice service provider may not be able to immediately come into compliance with its caller ID authentication obligations after it becomes eligible to receive” a SPC token, the Commission stated that it “will not consider a voice service provider that diligently pursues a certificate once it is able to receive one in violation of [its] rules.” *Id.* at 1882-83, para. 50.

³⁴ *Second Caller ID Authentication Report and Order*, 36 FCC Rcd at 1882-83, para. 50.

³⁵ *Caller ID Authentication Governance Framework Revised to Enable Earlier Participation by Providers Without Direct Access to Telephone Numbers*, WC Docket Nos. 13-97, 17-97, Public Notice, DA 21-549 (WCB May 10, 2021). The Governance Authority’s original SPC token access policy for STIR/SHAKEN required, in part, that an entity have “direct access to telephone numbers from the North American Number Plan Administrator (NANPA) and National Pooling Administrator (NPA).” STI-Governance Authority (GA), Policy Decision Binder, Policy Decision 001: SPC Token Access Policy Version 1.0, at 5. The revised Governance SPC token access policy requires voice service providers to: (1) have a current form 499A on file with the Commission, (2) have been assigned an Operating Company Number, and (3) have certified with the Commission that they have implemented STR/SHAKEN or comply with the Robocall Mitigation Program requirements that are listed in the FCC Robocall Mitigation Database. STI-GA Policy Decision Binder, Policy Decision 001: SPC Token Access Policy Version 1.2, at 6. On July 26, 2021, the Governance authority further revised the SPC token access policy to allow “delegate certificates to be used by third-party callers as well as companies originating calls from toll-free numbers to also provide SHAKEN authentication.” Press Release, STI-GA, *STI-GA Announces Policy Changes to Support Delegate Certificates and Toll-Free* (July 26, 2021), <https://www.atis.org/press-releases/sti-ga-announces-policy-changes-to-support-delegate-certificates-and-toll-free/>.

³⁶ *Reevaluation of STIR/SHAKEN Extensions Public Notice* at 4.

³⁷ *Id.*

We again find that the extension remains necessary for the reason originally identified by the Commission. TNS concurs that “changes to [Governance Authority] policies have made it significantly easier for voice service providers to obtain their own SPC tokens,”³⁸ and CTIA agrees that the SPC token access policy adopted by Governance Authority “significantly expanded the universe of service providers qualified for SPC token access.”³⁹ Nevertheless, there may still be entities meeting the definition of a provider of “voice service” that are unable to obtain a token, and thus unable to comply with the STIR/SHAKEN rules.⁴⁰ For this reason, commenters addressing this extension support retaining it, while acknowledging most providers will not need it.⁴¹ We agree and retain the extension so as to not subject such voice service providers to regulatory obligations they cannot fulfill. In so doing, we continue to believe that token access does not stand as a significant barrier to full participation in STIR/SHAKEN.

C. Other Issues.

Other Topics in Comments. As this Public Notice is limited to the reevaluation of the granted implementation extensions, we decline to address any issues or proposals contained in the comments and reply comments that are beyond the scope of this narrow obligation.⁴²

Contact Information. For further information, please contact Jonathan Lechter, Attorney Advisor, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, at 202-418-0984 or by email at Jonathan.Lechter@fcc.gov.

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³⁸ TNS Comments at 2.

³⁹ CTIA Reply Comments at 5. CTIA states that there are currently “more than 750 service providers authorized by the STI-PA to receive tokens.” *Id.* at 4-5.

⁴⁰ TNS Comments at 2 (supporting retaining the extension for the narrow circumstances when voice service providers will be unable to obtain a SPC token).

⁴¹ *Id.* at 1 (“TNS recommends that the Commission not revise the implementation extensions previously granted for the implementation of STIR/SHAKEN.”); TransNexus Comments at 2-3 (stating that “it seems appropriate to leave the extension on the books to comply with the TRACED Act, although this extension will not be applicable in most cases.”).

⁴² *See, e.g.*, CTIA Reply Comments at 7 (arguing that the Commission should encourage “disciplined use of the ATIS standards that are the foundation of the STIR/SHAKEN framework”); INCOMPAS Reply Comments at 3 (arguing that the Commission should address IP interconnection barriers); Neustar, Inc. Comments at 5 (arguing that the Commission should encourage all voice service providers to follow ATIS specifications when assigning attestation levels under the STIR/SHAKEN framework); Numeracle Comments at 13 (arguing that the Commission should issue mandates to improve the know your caller and customer due diligence practices of service providers to increase the efficacy of the STIR/SHAKEN framework). The Commission is currently considering the record in response to the May 2022 *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, which sought comment on some of these issues, and has released a *Notice of Inquiry* on caller ID authentication for non-IP networks with comments due on December 12, 2022 and reply comments due on January 11, 2023. *See Gateway Provider Order and Further Notice* at 82-83, para. 215; *Non-IP Caller ID Authentication Notice of Inquiry*.