



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

News Media Information 202-418-0500
Internet: www.fcc.gov

DA 26-275

Released: March 20, 2026

DOMESTIC SECTION 214 APPLICATION FILED FOR THE TRANSFER OF CONTROL OF SIERRA TEL COMMUNICATIONS GROUP TO VARCOMM-SIERRATEL, INC.

NON-STREAMLINED PLEADING CYCLE ESTABLISHED

WC Docket Nos. 26-43

Comments Due: April 3, 2026

Reply Comments Due: April 10, 2026

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau seeks comment from interested parties on the application¹ filed by Sierra Tel Communications Group (Sierra Group) and Varcomm-SierraTel, Inc. (Varcomm-SierraTel) (together, Applicants), pursuant to section 214(a) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and section 63.04 of the Commission's rules,² requesting consent to transfer control of Sierra Group's wholly-owned subsidiaries, Sierra Telephone Company, Inc. (Sierra Telephone), and Sierra Telephone Long Distance (Sierra Long Distance) (together, Sierra Group Companies) to Varcomm-SierraTel.

Sierra Group is a California corporation and holding company that does not directly provide any telecommunications services but owns all of the issued and outstanding stock of the Sierra Group Companies.³ Sierra Telephone, a California corporation, is a rural incumbent local exchange carrier (LEC) that serves three local telephone exchanges in the Coarsegold, Raymond, and Mariposa exchanges spanning across Madera and Mariposa Counties in California.⁴ Applicants state that Sierra Telephone, a designated Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC), is a recipient of high-cost Universal Service Fund (USF) support in the form of High-Cost Loop Support and Connect America Fund–Broadband Loop Support (CAF-BLS).⁵ Sierra Long Distance, a California corporation, is an interexchange carrier

¹ Domestic Section 214 Application for the Transfer of Control of Sierra Telephone Company, Inc., and Sierra Telephone Long Distance to Varcomm-SierraTel, Inc., WC Docket No. 26-43 (filed Feb. 19, 2026) (Application); Applicants filed supplements to the Application on Mar. 6, 2026 and Mar. 16, 2026. Letter from Gerard J. Duffy, Consultant for Varcomm-SierraTel, Inc., and Walter W. Hansell, Counsel for Sierra Tel Communications Group, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket No. 26-43 (filed Mar. 6, 2026) (First Supplement); Letter from Gerard J. Duffy, Consultant for Varcomm-SierraTel, Inc., and Walter W. Hansell, Counsel for Sierra Tel Communications Group, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket No. 26-43 (filed Mar. 16, 2026) (Second Supplement). Applicants also filed applications for the transfer of authorizations associated with wireless and international services. Any action on the Application is without prejudice to Commission action on other related, pending applications.

² See 47 U.S.C. § 214(a); 47 CFR § 63.04.

³ Application at 1-2, 10. Sierra Group also owns three other non-FCC regulated entities that are included in this transaction. *Id.* at 2.

⁴ *Id.* at 1.

⁵ *Id.* at 3, 13-14. Applicants also state that Sierra Telephone participates in the Lifeline program, and Varcomm-SierraTel will continue Sierra Telephone's participation post-consummation of the transaction. *Id.* at 15.

that offers interstate and intrastate long distance toll services to the residents of Sierra Telephone Company's service areas.⁶

Varcomm Holdings formed Varcomm-SierraTel, a California corporation, pursuant to the proposed transaction to become the owner of the Sierra Group Companies.⁷ V Squared Holdings, Inc. (V Squared) is a California corporation that owns 100% of Varcomm Holdings, Inc. (Varcomm Holdings), a California corporation, which owns and controls 90% of Varcomm-SierraTel's issued and outstanding stock.⁸ V Squared, Varcomm Holdings, and Varcomm-SierraTel are all intermediate holding companies that do not directly provide telecommunications services.⁹

Varcomm Holdings owns 100% of the issued and outstanding stock of Varcomm Broadband, Inc (Varcomm Broadband) and Ducor Telephone Company (Ducor).¹⁰ Varcomm Broadband is an Internet Service Provider and competitive LEC that serves portions of Tulare, Tehama, and Kern Counties in California, and Linn County in Oregon.¹¹ Ducor provides local exchange telephone service and exchange access services as a rural LEC in a California study area comprised of three rural exchanges in Tulare County and Tehama County.¹² Applicants state that Ducor is a recipient of high-cost USF support in the form of Alternative Connect America Cost Model II.¹³ Applicants state that none of the telecommunications or broadband service areas of the Sierra Group Companies overlap or are adjacent to any of the telecommunications or broadband service areas of Ducor or Varcomm Broadband, and therefore the Applicants do not serve or receive USF support in any of the same locations.¹⁴

Pursuant to the terms of the proposed transaction, Varcomm-SierraTel intends to purchase 100% of the issued and outstanding common stock of the Sierra Group Companies and assume ownership and control over Sierra Telephone and Sierra Long Distance's section 214 authorizations.¹⁵ Post-consummation of the transaction, Sierra Telephone and Sierra Long Distance will remain as separately operated subsidiaries of Varcomm-SierraTel.¹⁶

Applicants assert that a grant of the Application would serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity.¹⁷ Because the proposed transaction would involve the exchange and assumption of Universal Service Fund high-cost mechanism obligations, in order to sufficiently analyze whether the proposed transaction would serve the public interest, we accept the Application for non-streamlined processing.¹⁸

Domestic Section 214 Application Filed for the Transfer of Control of the Sierra Telephone Company, Inc. and Sierra Long Distance to Varcomm-SierraTel, Inc., WC Docket No. 26-43 (filed Feb. 19, 2026).

⁶ *Id.* at 1-2.

⁷ Application at 2.

⁸ *Id.* at 2; *see also* First Supplement (Eric N. Votaw owns the remaining 10% of Varcomm-SierraTel, Inc.).

⁹ *Id.* at 11.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 2.

¹¹ *Id.* at 3.

¹² *Id.* at 2-3 (Study Area Code 542313), 11.

¹³ *Id.* at 3. Applicants also state that Ducor participates in the Lifeline program. *Id.* at 11.

¹⁴ Second Supplement at 1; *see also* Application at 3.

¹⁵ Application at 9.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 9-10.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 13.

¹⁸ *See* 47 CFR § 63.03(c)(1)(v).

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Application identified herein has been found, upon initial review, to be acceptable for filing. The Commission reserves the right to return any application if, upon further examination, it is determined to be defective and not in conformance with the Commission's rules and policies.

Interested parties may file comments and reply comments on or before the dates indicated on the first page of this document. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS).

- Electronic Filers: Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/>.
- Paper Filers: Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing.
 - Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial courier, or by the U.S. Postal Service. **All filings must be addressed to the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.**
 - Hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary are accepted between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. by the FCC's mailing contractor at 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes and boxes must be disposed of before entering the building.
 - Commercial courier deliveries (any deliveries not by the U.S. Postal Service) must be sent to 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701.
 - Filings sent by U.S. Postal Service First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express must be sent to 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554.

People with Disabilities: To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530.

In addition, e-mail one copy of each pleading to each of the following:

- 1) Megan Danner, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, megan.danner@fcc.gov;
- 2) Robert Martin, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, robert.martin@fcc.gov;
- 3) Audra Hale-Maddox, Telecommunications Access and Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, audra.hale-maddox@fcc.gov;
- 4) Karen Johnson, Office of International Affairs, karen.johnson@fcc.gov; and
- 5) Jim Bird, Office of General Counsel, jim.bird@fcc.gov.

The proceeding in this Notice shall be treated as a "permit-but-disclose" proceeding in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules. Persons making *ex parte* presentations must file a copy of any written presentation or a memorandum summarizing any oral presentation within two business days after the presentation (unless a different deadline applicable to the Sunshine period applies). Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentation must (1) list all persons attending or otherwise participating in the meeting at which the *ex parte* presentation was made, and (2) summarize all data presented and arguments made during the presentation. If the presentation consisted in whole or in part of the presentation of data or arguments already reflected in the presenter's written comments, memoranda or other filings in the proceeding, the presenter may provide citations to such data or arguments in his or her prior comments, memoranda, or other filings (specifying

the relevant page and/or paragraph numbers where such data or arguments can be found) in lieu of summarizing them in the memorandum. Documents shown or given to Commission staff during *ex parte* meetings are deemed to be written *ex parte* presentations and must be filed consistent with rule 1.1206(b), 47 CFR § 1.1206(b). Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.

To allow the Commission to consider fully all substantive issues regarding the Application in as timely and efficient a manner as possible, petitioners and commenters should raise all issues in their initial filings. New issues may not be raised in responses or replies.¹⁹ A party or interested person seeking to raise a new issue after the pleading cycle has closed must show good cause why it was not possible for it to have raised the issue previously. Submissions after the pleading cycle has closed that seek to raise new issues based on new facts or newly discovered facts should be filed within 15 days after such facts are discovered. Absent such a showing of good cause, any issues not timely raised may be disregarded by the Commission.

For further information, please contact Megan Danner, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, at (202) 418-1151 or Robert Martin, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, at (202) 418-2903.

-FCC-

¹⁹ See 47 CFR § 1.45(c).