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Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 7, 2000

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Michael Balmoris 202-418-0253
Email: mbalmori@fcc.gov

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION TAKES ADDITIONAL STEPS TO SAFEGUARD THE NATION'S TELEPHONE NUMBERING SYSTEM

“Anti-Hoarding” Utilization Standards Set for Carriers

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rules to reduce the need for new area codes, avoiding the inconvenience, cost and confusion associated with changes in area codes for consumers and businesses. Most significantly, the Commission adopted a utilization threshold – the amount of phone numbers a carrier must use before asking for more numbering resources – of 60%, which eventually increases to 75% in increments of 5% over the next three years.

Today's *Second Report and Order and Further Notice* builds upon Commission action adopted earlier this year to ensure that the nation's numbering system, which is part of the North American Numbering Plan (NANP), is used efficiently. That rulemaking, adopted on March 17, 2000, established, among other things, 1) national thousands-block number pooling, which enables numbers to be allocated in blocks of 1,000 rather than the previous 10,000 block and 2) numbering resource reclamation requirements to ensure the return of unused numbers to the NANP inventory for assignment to other carriers.

The Commission today continues its work to ensure that the numbering resources of the NANP are used efficiently, and that all carriers have the numbering resources needed to compete in the expanding telecommunications marketplace. The measures adopted today include:

- Adopting a utilization threshold of 60%, which increases to 75% over the next three years before carriers could get additional numbers in their service area.
- Establishing a five-year term for a national Pooling Administrator that will be selected on a competitive basis so that thousand-block pooling can be rolled out nationally.
- Establishing an auditing program to verify carrier compliance with the Commission's rules.

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The Commission also adopted a *Further Notice* that seeks comment on several numbering issues, including modifying the current prohibition on service-specific and technology-specific overlays and permitting states to implement service-specific and technology-specific overlays subject to certain conditions. Also, the Commission is seeking comment on what policies could be implemented to reduce the extent to which the rate center structure contributes to and /or accelerates numbering resource exhaust.

Finally, the Commission declined to adopt several other proposals including mandatory nationwide ten-digit dialing.

Docket Nos.: CC 99-200 and 96-98

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Action by the Commission December 7, 2000 by Second Report and Order and Further Notice (FCC No. 00-429). Chairman Kennard and Commissioners Ness, Furchtgott-Roth, Powell, and Tristani.

Common Carrier Bureau Staff Contacts:

Cheryl Callahan or Aaron Goldberger at (202) 418-2320

Wireless Telecommunications Bureau contacts:

Blaise Scinto at (202) 418-1380 or David Furth at (202) 418-0632

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