



NEWS

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**FCC EXTENDS WIRELESS LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY
DEADLINE BY 1 YEAR TO NOVEMBER 24, 2003
*Number Pooling Deadline Remains November 24, 2002***

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has adopted a *Memorandum Opinion and Order (MO&O)* denying in part Verizon Wireless's (Verizon) petition from the Commission's wireless local number portability (LNP) rules. The Commission denied Verizon's request for permanent forbearance stating that wireless LNP will be necessary to preserve consumer choice and enhance competition among Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS) carriers and between the wireless and wireline industries. The FCC found, however, that extending the LNP deadline for a period of one year until November 24, 2003, will allow adequate time to resolve all outstanding LNP implementation issues, including training personnel on other non-technical tasks, and public safety coordination. It will also reduce the burdens otherwise associated with the simultaneous implementation of number portability and thousands-block number porting. The extension also will allow wireless carriers to guard against any potential network disruptions that might result from simultaneous implementation of thousands-block number pooling and porting. The Commission emphasized that the number pooling deadline for CMRS carriers will remain November 24, 2002.

In the adopted MO&O, the Commission noted that providing a transition between number pooling and number portability will help ensure the FCC's critical numbering optimization goals are met before the obligation to implement LNP becomes due. The Commission also found that the competitive reasons that lead the Commission to require wireless LNP remain valid today and that there are sufficient competitive and consumer benefits in terms of innovative service offerings, higher quality services, and lower prices to justify the cost of implementing LNP in the near future. Finally, the Commission considered and rejected arguments for a delay of more than one year, and stated that carriers will be expected to comply with this new schedule absent extraordinary circumstances.

Background on Number Portability:

Under the Commission's prior decisions, wireless carriers in the largest 100 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) were required to support service provider LNP, in the areas in which another carrier has made a specific request for the provision of LNP, by November 24, 2002. LNP will enable wireless customers to "port" their telephone number in the event they switch from one wireless carrier to another, or from a wireline to a wireless carrier. On July 26, 2001, Verizon filed a petition asking for permanent forbearance from the Commission's wireless LNP rules. Today the Commission extended the deadline for wireless carriers to provide LNP by 1 year to November 24, 2003.

Background on Number Pooling:

In its First Report and Order on numbering resource optimization, the FCC adopted several administrative and technical measures to allow it to closely monitor the use of numbering resources within the North American Number Plan. The Commission also adopted a system for allocating numbers

in blocks of 1,000 rather than 10,000 (thousands-block number pooling). The Commission determined that all carriers, including wireless carriers, would be required to participate in thousands-block number pooling once they became LNP-capable. The pooling deadline is November 24, 2002 (in area codes where wireline carriers are providing pooling), for wireless carriers operating in the largest 100 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs).

Action by the Commission July 16, 2002, by Memorandum Opinion and Order (FCC 02-215). Chairman Powell and Commissioner Copps with Commissioners Abernathy and Martin approving in part and dissenting in part, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps and Martin issuing separate statements.

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