



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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STATEMENT BY FCC COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE ENFORCEMENT BUREAU AND VERIZON WIRELESS HAVE ENTERED INTO A CONSENT DECREE

“This month, the FCC has taken actions that send an important message about how seriously this agency takes its public interest obligation to protect consumers. In both the Bill Shock Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which we adopted on October 14, and today’s Consent Decree with Verizon Wireless, the Commission’s initial examination demonstrated that voluntary steps to resolve the issues that wireless consumers identified in their complaints were insufficient and warranted further inquiry.

“Trends in the wireless industry indicate that the Commission’s interest in protecting wireless consumers should only increase. The *Fourteenth Mobile Services Report*, which the Commission adopted in May of this year, shows that the percentages of Americans who are subscribing to wireless services and opting to replace their wireline phone services with wireless phone services are growing. And surveys, including one that the FCC prepared in conjunction with development of the National Broadband Plan, further suggest that a substantial percentage of Americans are choosing to access the Internet solely from their wireless service devices.

“To me, these trends mean that, when consumers voice concerns over their bills and other aspects of their relationships with service providers, the FCC must take steps to ensure that service providers take action that will address those concerns. Therefore, once again, I applaud the Enforcement Bureau for investigating these mystery data fees. I also commend the Bureau and Verizon Wireless for acting swiftly to negotiate meaningful measures to protect consumers. The monetary contribution that Verizon Wireless volunteered to pay to the U.S. Treasury is the largest such contribution a licensee has made as a result of an investigation and sends a clear message as to how important this is to us. The other steps Verizon Wireless has agreed to implement through today’s Consent Decree, such as the Data Charge Task Force and greater training for its customer service representatives, should result in processes to prevent billing errors in the future and other measures to better inform and protect consumers.

“I commend Chairman Genachowski for his leadership in shining a spotlight on the need for enhanced protections for wireless consumers from billing errors. I am confident that Verizon Wireless will continue to show the type of industry leadership that will result in systemic efforts to better identify and address wireless consumer concerns.