



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. Cir. 1974).

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FCC LAUNCHES RURAL CALL COMPLETION TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS CALL ROUTING AND TERMINATION PROBLEMS IN RURAL AMERICA

Task Force To Hold Workshop October 18; Intercarrier Compensation Reform Is Long-Term Solution

Washington, D.C. – Today the Federal Communications Commission announced the creation of the Rural Call Completion Task Force to investigate and address the growing problem of calls to rural customers that are being delayed or that fail to connect.

Rural telephone companies have reported a 2000% increase in complaints between April 2010 and March 2011 regarding incoming calls that are delayed, never completed, of poor quality, or lack accurate caller ID information. Failed or degraded calls not only undermine the integrity of the nation's telephone networks and frustrate consumers, but they also pose a serious risk to public safety and harm the rural economy.

The problem appears to be occurring in rural areas where long-distance carriers pay charges to complete calls to the local telephone company, calls which may be delivered using specialized call routing providers. The FCC is working to comprehensively reform the system that sets these rates – the intercarrier compensation system – to reduce opportunities and incentives for arbitrage and other manipulation schemes. Reform proposals would also tighten rules that require carriers to provide accurate information about call origin for billing and other purposes.

The Task Force will hold a workshop – tentatively scheduled for October 18 – to identify specific causes of the problem and discuss potential solutions with key stakeholders. Details about the workshop are forthcoming. Issues for the Task Force and Workshop include:

- The extent of the call termination problem in rural areas
- The causes of the problem, including whether carriers are violating the law by blocking or restricting calls to other carriers
- Actions that can be taken by the Commission to address the problem

The Rural Call Completion Task Force includes staff from the agency's Wireline Competition, Public Safety and Homeland Security, and Enforcement Bureaus.

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