

STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI

Re: *Presentation on Wireless Carrier Usage Alerts to Prevent Bill Shock*

One year ago today, I was pleased to join with CTIA – The Wireless Association – and Consumers Union to announce a solution to a problem that was costing millions of U.S. consumers hundreds, and sometimes thousands of dollars each, or more – bill shock.

This was a big step forward in the Commission’s Consumer Empowerment Agenda. It harnessed the power of technology to empower consumers with information they can use to save money on their monthly mobile bills. It empowered consumers to help make the market work.

Specifically, we announced that the wireless industry would provide consumers with timely alerts informing them when they were approaching and exceeding their plan’s limit for text, data, and voice, or when they were about to be billed extra for international roaming usage. These alerts would be free and would be sent automatically by mobile companies to their customers, with no action necessary by consumers.

Prior to this announcement, the Commission had formally proposed rules to tackle the bill shock problem. In light of these steps on the part of the wireless industry, we put our rulemaking on hold and said we would take a “trust, but verify” approach to ensuring that carriers take these steps to help eliminate bill shock, and that consumers are treated as they deserve.

Today we can verify that carriers are living up to their commitments. And U.S. wireless consumers now have more information and tools to avoid bill shock.

Each of CTIA’s participating carriers is today providing consumers with at least two of the four required alerts, which are for text, data, voice, and international roaming fees.

And we are on track for all carriers to provide all four of these alerts within six months, as they have pledged under this initiative. More than 97% of wireless customers across the country will be protected from bill shock when this plan is fully implemented.

Fulfilling our commitment and responsibility to monitor this agreement, and to help better inform consumers, and to use technology and transparency to empower consumers, the Commission has posted on our website information about the carriers’ commitments and actions on our website. Consumers Union will also be publishing this information.

We will continue to work with CTIA towards the April 17, 2013 deadline of full compliance.

I appreciate the efforts of the mobile industry to help end consumer bill shock. We will continue to be vigilant in ensuring mobile consumers are protected and empowered.

Thank you to CGB for your work on this issue, and all the items on our Consumer Empowerment Agenda. Between our efforts on bill shock, and our efforts to crack down on mystery fees and cramming, consumers can feel confident knowing that the FCC’s got their back.