

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *IP-Enabled Services; Telephone Number Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers; Telephone Number Portability; Developing a Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime; Connect America Fund; Numbering Resource Optimization; Petition of Vonage Holdings Corp. for Limited Waiver for Section 52.15(g)(2)(i) of the Commission's Rules Regarding Access to Numbering Resources; petition of TeleCommunication Systems, Inc., and HBF Group, Inc. for Waiver of Part 52 of the Commission's Rules; Numbering Policies for Modern Communications, CC Docket Nos. 95-116, 01-92, 99-200, WC Docket Nos. 04-36, 07-243, 10-90, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Order, and Notice of Inquiry (April 18, 2013)*

I remember eighteen years ago when my parents in Hartford, Connecticut announced that henceforth, the childhood telephone number I had always known would change. The house had not changed. Same collection of New England antiques. Same drafty windows. Same bulky telephones bolted to the wall. But going forward, no more area code 203. Welcome to area code 860. Not an epic moment in the lifetime of area code expansion. But I recall the mild sense of dislocation. I remember feeling that something was different because something had changed.

What felt odd nearly two decades ago is now much more common. After all, the ways we communicate have changed dramatically. Our networks and the number of devices we use have multiplied. The link between number and place is still present, but that too has changed. People now move and take their numbers with them. Case in point: in my office here at the Commission, half of those who work with me have phone numbers with area codes that do not reflect where they live. And what is happening in my office is not unusual, it is happening across the country.

With all this change, however, what still matters is numbers. They are still an essential part of our communications networks. They are still an important part of the way we connect, a valuable and finite resource. We must plan for their use judiciously. We must plan for their use consistent with the law.

In the Communications Act, Congress directed this agency to ensure that numbers used for communications are distributed "on an equitable basis." The law requires distribution through "impartial entities." It also reserves for the Commission exclusive jurisdiction over numbering, but specifically provides the agency with authority to delegate tasks involving numbering to our state counterparts.

Consistent with the law, from time to time the Commission updates its numbering policies to reflect how the ways we communicate change. A decade ago, in 2003, the agency expanded number portability to wireless services. For the first time, consumers could take their number with them when they switched among wireless and wireline providers. A few years later, in 2007, the agency again updated its rules to let consumers keep their numbers when switching to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service. Both steps enhanced competition. Both steps were good for consumers.

Today, we update our policies yet again, to reflect further changes in communications and the technologies we use to connect. There are two critical parts to today's effort.

First, we conduct a broad rulemaking and inquiry into the operational implications of providing interconnected VoIP providers with direct access to numbering resources. The time is right. We are mid-course in a broader transition to IP services. VoIP subscriptions have risen more than 50 percent since 2008, and now number 37 million. Navigating the transition to IP-enabled services requires updating our policies. As we do so, we must always keep in mind the four essential values in the Communications Act: public safety, universal service, competition, and consumer protection. I think this effort is consistent with that approach. To this end, I appreciate that we ask questions about the impact this will have on numbering exhaustion, routing, porting, and intercarrier compensation. I also appreciate that it includes queries about the changing nature of the link between number and place, calling and geography, and home and area code.

Second, we conduct a limited trial. We grant Vonage, a VoIP provider, a conditional six-month waiver to allow direct access to numbering resources. This is a test. It will allow us to identify any problems. It will allow us to have a real-time laboratory in which to study to issues. It will inform our process as we chart a course toward more permanent policies. So I am pleased that the Chairman accepted my recommendation to require the Wireline Competition Bureau to issue a report at the conclusion of the trial so that we will have the opportunity to learn from the results before we move on to final rules. Given our shared interest in these issues, I encourage our state counterparts to comment on this report and the impact of this trial.

The mechanics of this proceeding are complex. But like so many other things before the agency, this is a reminder of how the times we live in are transitional. My childhood home still has those bulky phones bolted to the wall, but they are supplemented by wireless devices, Internet connections—and technologies simply unimaginable two decades ago when the area code was changed.

In the face of all this change, updating how we manage our numbering resources is the right thing to do. I support this effort. A trial like this is a smart way to proceed. So thank you to the Wireline Competition Bureau for its efforts on these issues here and going forward.