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**For Immediate Release**

**FCC Modernizes Numbering Rules To Spur Competitive VoIP Options for Consumers**

Washington, D.C. (June 18, 2015) – The Federal Communications Commission today modernized and streamlined its rules governing the distribution of phone numbers by leveling the playing field for interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providers, which are increasingly popular with consumers.

Interconnected VoIP providers – defined as those capable of placing and receiving calls to and from the traditional phone network -- currently must get numbers from third-party carriers. Allowing these providers to go directly to numbering administrators for phone numbers will benefit consumers by reducing costs and promoting additional competition from these innovative VoIP providers, the FCC found.

The Order adopted unanimously by the FCC also facilitates the ongoing transitions in communications technology that are sweeping the nation and improves FCC oversight of the numbering system. These improvements will help ensure that calls connect nationwide and provide more accountability in and protections for the numbering system.

Nearly one-third of all retail local telephone connections – about 48 million connections – were served by VoIP at the end of 2013. Giving VoIP providers direct access to numbers will promote competitive choice for consumers, including by speeding the transfer of a customer’s existing number to or from an interconnected VoIP provider, known as “porting” a number.

The Order also imposes a number of conditions to protect and enhance the security and integrity of the numbering system. Conditions will also ensure that all numbers distributed are used, protecting the system from running out of phone numbers.

Action by the Commission June 18, 2015 by Report and Order (FCC 15-70). Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners Clyburn, Rosenworcel, Pai and O’Rielly. Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners Clyburn, Rosenworcel, Pai and O’Rielly issuing statements.

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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).*

