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For Immediate Release

FCC TAKES FURTHER STEPS TOWARD NATIONWIDE NUMBER PORTABILITY

Modifies Rules to Allow for More Efficient Use of Networks

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2018—The Federal Communications Commission took further steps today to set the stage for nationwide number portability, which will expand to consumers the benefits of competition currently provided by local number portability.

Number portability is the ability to keep an existing phone number when changing carriers and locations, allowing consumers and businesses to retain the convenience and value of a familiar number in changing circumstances. But currently, consumers are not able to fully port a number to any wireless or wireline provider.

To pave the way for nationwide number portability, the FCC is modifying rules that were designed for an older market structure of separate local and long-distance calling. These antiquated rules are not applicable to today's integrated all-distance services, impede nationwide number portability, and frustrate efficient use of the telecommunications network.

The changes adopted today in the Report and Order include:

- Elimination of the last vestiges of the “dialing parity” rule. This rule was intended to ensure that consumers could choose and access a stand-alone long-distance provider without dialing extra digits. However, stand-alone long-distance service is disappearing with the rise of all-distance plans, VoIP and wireless, and the FCC in 2015 eliminated the rule for most local providers. Today's action eliminates the rules for competitive providers, and for stand-alone services grandfathered in 2015.
- Providing flexibility in call routing by easing the “N-1” rule that currently requires the next-to-last carrier in a call – typically the long-distance provider – to query the number portability database. The modification allows other carriers in the chain to query the database. This will open new opportunities for call routing as the industry prepares for nationwide number portability.

The FCC's federal advisory committee on numbering, the North American Numbering Council or NANC, in June approved a report on national number portability implementation, which is available at http://www.nanc-chair.org/docs/mtg_docs/Jun18_NANC_NNP_Report_Final.pdf. On July 3rd, the Commission asked the NANC to continue to provide input on the relative costs, benefits, and technical requirements of two of the possible nationwide number portability mechanisms, as well as the next steps the Commission and industry should take to achieve full nationwide number portability.

Action by the Commission July 12, 2018 by Report and Order (FCC 18-95). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, and Rosenworcel approving. Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, and Carr issuing separate statements.

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