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For Immediate Release**FCC MODERNIZING TOLL FREE NUMBER DISTRIBUTION
SYSTEM TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY, FAIRNESS*****First-Ever U.S. Auction of Numbers Planned for New 833 Code***

WASHINGTON, September 26, 2018 – The Federal Communications Commission is launching an experiment to modernize the way it distributes toll free numbers.

For the first time, the FCC will use an auction to distribute certain toll free numbers. The numbers to be auctioned are approximately 17,000 numbers in the new 833 toll free code for which there have been multiple, competing requests. Many of these numbers are easy to remember, such as 833-LAWYERS or 833-333-3333.

By using an auction, the FCC will ensure that sought-after numbers are awarded to the parties that value them most. The FCC will study the results of the auction to determine how to best use the mechanism to distribute toll free numbers equitably and efficiently in the future as well.

In addition, the FCC will reserve certain 833 numbers for distribution to government and non-profit entities that request them for public health and safety purposes.

Toll free calling originated in 1967 and remains important to large and small businesses for sales, customer service, advertising, and marketing. Consumers value the convenience that trusted or easily memorized toll free numbers can provide.

Currently, toll free numbers are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. But this system does not consider the need for or the value placed on particular numbers, and the system can be gamed by organizations who have the fastest connectivity to toll free number databases.

Revenues from the auction will be used to defray the cost of toll free numbering administration, reducing the cost of numbering for all users. The Order establishing the toll free auction will also authorize and accommodate the use of a secondary market for numbers awarded at auction to further distribute these numbers to the entities that value them most.

Action by the Commission September 26, 2018 by Report and Order (FCC 18-137). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, and Rosenworcel approving and issuing separate 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. Cir. 1974).