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For Immediate Release

FCC SEEKS TO COMBAT 911 FEE DIVERSION

WASHINGTON, September 30, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today launched a proceeding to examine ways to combat 911 fee diversion—the practice by some states and other jurisdictions of using the 911 fees that consumers pay on their phone bills for non-911 purposes.

Each year, the Commission [reports](#) to Congress on the collection and expenditure of 911 fees by states and territories. These reports show that despite the critical importance of funding for 911 services, some states divert a portion of the funds collected for 911 to other purposes. Between 2012 and 2018 alone, states and other jurisdictions diverted over \$1.275 billion in 911 fees to non-911 programs or to the state’s general fund.

In a Notice of Inquiry adopted today, the Commission seeks comment on the effect that 911 fee diversion has had on the provision of 911 services and the transition to Next Generation 911. The Commission asks for input on ways that it or other entities could discourage 911 fee diversion, such as restricting federal grant funding for diverting states. The Commission also seeks comment on regulatory steps that it could take to deter fee diversion, such as limiting the availability of FCC licenses and other benefits based on fee diversion or using the Commission’s truth-in-billing authority to increase consumer awareness of fee diversion where it occurs. In addition, the Commission asks whether it could improve its annual 911 fee reporting process to further discourage fee diversion.

Americans place over 200 million emergency calls to 911 call centers each year. To ensure that the 911 system provides the public with the life-saving services they need in times of crisis, 911 centers must be adequately funded. Funding is also needed to support migrating 911 networks from legacy technology to advanced, Internet Protocol-enabled next generation technology that will make the 911 system more resilient and support advanced capabilities, such as text messaging and streaming video. Funding for these critical 911 purposes is provided in part by dedicated 911 fees established by each state and territory that appear as charges on customer bills for wireless, wireline, and other communications services.

Action by the Commission September 30, 2020 by Notice of Inquiry (FCC 20-134). Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly, Carr, Rosenworcel, and Starks approving. Chairman Pai, Commissioners O’Rielly and Rosenworcel issuing separate statements.

PS Docket Nos. 20-291, 09-14

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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).