November 25, 2025

# FCC FACT SHEET*

## Numbering Policies for Modern Communications

Third Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking – WC Docket Nos. 13-97, 07-243, 20-67.

**Background**: This *Third Report and Order and Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, if adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (Commission), would be another important step in fighting illegal robocalling. Specifically, the *Third Report and Order* would require direct access authorization holders whose authorizations predate the updated requirements adopted in the 2023 *Second Report and Order* to file the same robocall, public safety, and national security certifications and disclosures that have been required for new applications since 2023. Affected direct access authorization holders would be required to file the updated requirements within 30 days of the effective date of these rules, if adopted, in order to maintain their authorizations. In the *Third Further Notice*, we continue the fight against illegal robocalling by exploring how to bolster numbering resource protections as bad actors obtain large quantities of numbers to avoid robocall mitigation measures in order to continue exploiting American consumers. Specifically, we refresh the record on the reclamation of numbering resources from interconnected VoIP providers that obtained numbering resources through direct access but have subsequently had their VoIP numbering authorization revoked or terminated. Also, we seek comment on restricting VoIP numbering authorizations or reevaluating existing authorizations for entities identified on the Covered List, including their affiliates and subsidiaries, or if the Commission discovers "covered" equipment in an interconnected VoIP provider's network.

**What the Third Report and Order and Third Further Notice Would Do**:

- Require *all* authorization holders to make robocall-related certifications.
- Require *all* authorization holders to provide the same information, disclosures and certifications required by 47 CFR §§ 63.18(h) and (i), and be subject to review of foreign ownership by Executive Branch Agencies, if necessary.
- Require *all* authorization holders to make certifications demonstrating compliance with other Commission rules enhancing public safety, preventing access stimulation and intercarrier compensation, and ensuring the Commission's broadband maps are accurate.
- Refresh the record concerning number reclamation for resources obtained through direct access by interconnected VoIP providers whose VoIP numbering authorization was revoked or terminated.
- Seek comment on ways to further bolster numbering resource protections as bad actors continue to seek new and creative methods for exploiting consumers and causing harm.

*This document is being released as part of a "permit-but-disclose" proceeding. Any presentations or views on the subject expressed to the Commission or its staff, including by email, must be filed in WC Docket Nos. 13-97, 07-243, and 20-67, which may be accessed via the Electronic Comment Filing System (https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs). Before filing, participants should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules, including the general prohibition on presentations (written and oral) on matters listed on the Sunshine Agenda, which is typically released a week prior to the Commission's meeting. *See* 47 CFR § 1.1200 *et seq*.

**Before the**
**Federal Communications Commission**
**Washington, D.C. 20554**

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| In the Matter of | ) | |
| | ) | |
| Numbering Policies for Modern Communications | ) | WC Docket No. 13-97 |
| | ) | |
| Telephone Number Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers | ) | WC Docket No. 07-243 |
| | ) | |
| Implementation of TRACED Act Section 6(a) — Knowledge of Customers by Entities with Access to Numbering Resources | ) | WC Docket No. 20-67 |

# THIRD REPORT AND ORDER AND THIRD FURTHER NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING*

**Adopted: []** **Released: []**

**Comment Date: [30 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]**
**Reply Comment Date: [60 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]**

By the Commission:

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* This document has been circulated for tentative consideration by the Commission at its December open meeting. The issues referenced in this document and the Commission's ultimate resolutions of those issues remain under consideration and subject to change. This document does not constitute any official action by the Commission. However, the Chairman has determined that, in the interest of promoting the public's ability to understand the nature and scope of issues under consideration, the public interest would be served by making this document publicly available. The Commission's *ex parte* rules apply and presentations are subject to "permit-but-disclose" *ex parte* rules. *See, e.g.*, 47 CFR §§ 1.1206, 1.1200(a). Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules, including the general prohibition on presentations (written and oral) on matters listed on the Sunshine Agenda, which is typically released a week prior to the Commission's meeting. *See* 47 CFR §§ 1.1200(a), 1.1203.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Protecting Americans from the harmful effects of illegal robocalls remains the top consumer protection priority for the Federal Communications Commission (Commission).[1] When Congress directed the Commission in 2020 via the Pallone-Thune Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act to examine how to modify the Commission's rules and policies regarding direct access to numbers by providers of interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services, we examined the nexus between numbering resources and illegal calls, identifying the Commission's VoIP numbering authorization as an opportunity to strengthen our rules.[2]

2. The Commission updated its VoIP numbering authorization rules in the 2023 *Second Report and Order*.[3] The updated rules require that new applicants make robocall-related, public safety, and national security certifications and information disclosures.[4] These measures have provided much needed transparency and enhanced the Commission's enforcement mechanisms against potential bad actors seeking to exploit numbering resources and the authorization process, but currently apply only to applicants seeking an authorization as of the August 2024 effective date of the updated requirements.[5] Accompanying the *Second Report and Order*, the Commission sought comment in a *Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (*Second Further Notice*) as to whether direct access authorization holders whose authorizations predate the new requirements should be subject to the updated rules.[6]

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[1] FCC, *Stop Unwanted Robocalls and Texts*, https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/stop-unwanted-robocalls-and-texts (last visited Sept. 24, 2025).

[2] *See* Pallone-Thune Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act, Pub. L. No. 116-105, § 6(a)(1)-(2), 133 Stat. 3274, 3277 (2019) (TRACED Act). Section 6(a) of the TRACED Act also requires the Commission to "commence a proceeding to determine how Commission policies regarding access to number resources, including number resources for toll-free and non-toll-free telephone numbers, could be modified, including by establishing registration and compliance obligations, and requirements that providers of voice service given access to number resources take sufficient steps to know the identity of the customers of such providers" within 180 days after enactment; *see Numbering Policies for Modern Communications et al.*, WC Docket Nos. 13-97 et al., Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 36 FCC Rcd 12907, 12912, para. 10 (2021) (*First VoIP Direct Access Further Notice*); *see also Numbering Policies for Modern Communications et al.*, WC Docket Nos. 13-97 et al., Report and Order, 30 FCC Rcd 6839, 6841, para. 4 (2015), *appeal dismissed*, *NARUC v. FCC*, 851 F.3d 1324 (D.C. Cir. 2017) (*First VoIP Direct Access Report and Order*) (adopting the original direct access rules for interconnected VoIP providers).

[3] *See Numbering Policies for Modern Communications et al.*, WC Docket Nos. 13-97 et al., Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 36 FCC Rcd 12907, 12912, para. 10 (2021) (*First VoIP Direct Access Further Notice*); *Numbering Policies for Modern Communications et al*., WC Docket No. 13-97 et al., Second Report and Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 38 FCC Rcd 8951 (2023) (*Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*).

[4] *See* 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii). *See also Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8957-61, paras. 13-18.

[5] *See* Federal Communications Commission, Numbering Policies for Modern Communications, Final rule and announcement of effective date, 89 Fed. Reg. 64832 (Aug. 8, 2024) (*FR Notice*).

[6] *See Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8991-95, paras. 79-92. We use the terminology "existing authorization holder" to refer to interconnected VoIP providers that obtained direct

(continued….)

3. Today, we adopt this *Third Report and Order* as an important next step in fighting the harms of illegal calls, fraud and abuse. Specifically, we require direct access authorization holders whose authorizations predate the effective date of the updated requirements adopted in the *Second Report and Order* ("existing" authorization holders) to comply with the updated requirements within 30 days of the rules we adopt today becoming effective. By establishing this uniform framework for all authorization holders, we ensure that our ongoing actions targeting illegal robocalling and spoofing, as well as safeguards for national security and public safety, have a greater impact and are consistently applied. To that end, we first require all existing authorization holders to file the updated robocall-related certifications. Second, we require the existing authorization holders to file ownership and control disclosure information, reporting foreign ownership as outlined in our rules. Finally, we require existing authorization holders to file the updated certifications related to their ongoing compliance with other important Commission rules designed to strengthen public safety, prevent fraud, and enhance transparency for consumers. Authorization holders must timely file these certifications to maintain a VoIP numbering authorization and non-compliance, insufficient information, or filings that raise public interest concerns may warrant further review and could result in suspension of access to numbering resources and/or termination or revocation of an authorization. Today's actions enable consistent and comprehensive oversight of the authorization program and ensure that there are no gaps in safeguards against bad actors seeking to exploit our numbering resources.

4. In the accompanying *Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (*Third Further Notice*), we refresh the record on reclaiming numbering resources that were obtained directly from the Numbering Administrators by interconnected VoIP providers that subsequently had their authorizations revoked or terminated.[7] We also seek comment on whether the Commission should restrict VoIP numbering authorizations or reevaluate direct access authorizations for entities that appear on the Commission's Covered List[8] or that have "covered" equipment in their networks. Finally, we seek comment on other restrictions or protections we should consider for VoIP numbering authorizations or numbering resources.

## II. BACKGROUND

5. While achievements in technology have paved the way for advanced communications services and a rich competitive marketplace, greatly benefitting consumers, the proliferation of interconnected VoIP providers and call-originating entities has resulted in the voice network becoming

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access numbering authorizations prior to August 8, 2024 (that is, prior to the updated Commission rules adopted in the *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order* becoming effective). *See FR Notice*, 89 Fed. Reg. at 64832.

[7] In this *Third Report and Order*, we refer to both the North American Numbering Plan Administrator and the Pooling Administrator as the Numbering Administrator or Numbering Administrators. Although these functions are described separately in our rules, *see, e.g.*, 47 CFR §§ 52.13, 52.20, they are currently combined under a single Commission contract. *See* Press Release, FCC, FCC Selects SomosGov as Next Telephone Number Administrator and Reassigned Numbers Database Administrator (Dec. 21, 2020), https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-368493A1.pdf.

[8] 47 CFR § 1.50002; FCC, List of Equipment and Services Covered by Section 2 of the Secure Networks Act, https://www.fcc.gov/supplychain/coveredlist ("Section 1.50002 of the Commission's rules directs the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau to publish a list of communications equipment and services (Covered List) that are deemed to pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States or the security and safety of United States persons, based exclusively on any of four sources for such a determination and that such equipment or services possess certain capabilities as enumerated in section 2(a) of the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019, Pub. L. No. 116-124, 133 Stat. 158 (2020) (codified as amended at 47 U.S.C. §§ 1601–1609).").

more vulnerable to bad actors.[9] The Commission has worked diligently to encourage innovation and technology transition in the voice marketplace while striving to protect consumers from any negative effects of such new technologies. Over the last five years, we have strengthened and expanded the STIR/SHAKEN caller ID authentication framework and protected consumers from illegally spoofed robocalls by requiring that the caller ID information transmitted with a particular call matches the caller's telephone number.[10] We have also expanded robocall mitigation requirements for all providers, and taken major enforcement action against bad actors.[11]

6. The *First Report and Order* (2015) established the application process for interconnected VoIP providers to directly obtain numbering resources (i.e., the VoIP numbering authorization).[12] The process limits access to telephone numbers to entities that demonstrate they are authorized to provide service in the area for which they are requesting numbers.[13] The Commission found that giving interconnected VoIP providers direct access to numbering resources would improve responsiveness in the

[9] *Call Authentication Trust Anchor*; *Implementation of TRACED Act Section 6(a)—Knowledge of Customers by Entities with Access to Numbering Resources*, WC Docket Nos. 17-97 and 20-67, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 35 FCC Rcd 3241, 3243-44, para. 4 (2020) (*Caller ID Authentication First Report and Order*); *see also Call Authentication Trust Anchor*, WC Docket No. 17-97, Sixth Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 38 FCC Rcd 2573, 2591-92, para. 34 (2023) (*Caller ID Authentication Sixth Report and Order*).

[10] *See Caller ID Authentication Sixth Report and Order*, 38 FCC Rcd at 2574, para. 2 n.5. STIR/SHAKEN stands for Secure Telephone Identity Revisited, and Signature-based Handling of Asserted information using toKENs. *Id.* at 2575, para. 4 n.8.

[11] *Id*. at 2574, para. 2 n.5. *See also* Robocall Mitigation Database Filers, EB-TCD-25-00038590, Order, DA-25-737, 2025 WL 2496602 (EB Aug. 25, 2025) (removing an additional 1,203 non-compliant voice service providers from the Robocall Mitigation Database); *Telnyx, LLC*, Notice of Apparent Liability, FCC 25-10, 2025 WL 435678 (2025) (finding insufficient know-your-customer practices); *Sumco Panama SA et al.*, File No. EB-TCD-21-00031913, Forfeiture Order, FCC 23-64 (Aug. 3, 2023) (levying an historic fine of almost $300 million against a variety of entities which placed over five billion illegal auto warranty robocalls to consumers between January 2021 and March 2021); *One Eye LLC*, File No. EB-TCD-20-00031678, Final Determination Order, DA 23-389 (EB May 11, 2023) (prohibiting voice service providers from accepting call traffic from One Eye LLC); *Urth Access, LLC*, File No. EB-TCD-22-00034232, Order, DA 22-1271 (EB Dec. 8, 2022), https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-22-1271A1.pdf (directing all U.S.-based voice service providers to take immediate steps to mitigate suspected illegal student loan-related scam robocall traffic). The Commission has also entered into Memoranda of Understanding with 46 state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and Guam to establish critical information sharing and cooperation regarding robocalls. *See* FCC, *State Robocall Investigation Partnerships*, https://www.fcc.gov/fcc-state-robocall-investigation-partnerships (last updated Aug. 3, 2023).

[12] *See First VoIP Direct Access Report and Order*, 30 FCC Rcd at 6848-51, paras. 21-24; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(2).

[13] *See First VoIP Direct Access Report and Order*, 30 FCC Rcd at 6849, para. 22; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(2). The North American Numbering Plan (NANP) is the basic numbering scheme for telecommunications networks located in the United States and its territories, Canada, and parts of the Caribbean. *See* 47 CFR § 52.5(c). The Commission has interpreted section 52.15(g)(2) to require numbering resource applicants to submit evidence of either a state certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) or a Commission license or authorization. *See First VoIP Direct Access Report and Order*, 30 FCC Rcd at 6841, para. 4. At the time, only telecommunications carriers were able to provide this proof of authorization, until the Commission revised its numbering rules and adopted a process by which interconnected VoIP providers could satisfy this authorization requirement and thus obtain numbers directly from the Numbering Administrator. *Id.* at 6848, para. 21. Once an interconnected VoIP provider has Commission authorization to obtain numbering resources, it may request numbers directly from the Numbering Administrator. *First VoIP Direct Access Report and Order*, 30 FCC Rcd at 6849, para. 22 n.70 ("Once an interconnected VoIP provider obtains Commission authorization, we do not require it to notify the Commission of ongoing requests for numbers.").

number porting process and improve the visibility and accuracy of number utilization.[14] Moreover, the Commission found that establishing this authorization process would enhance its ability to enforce rules governing interconnected VoIP providers, and help stakeholders and the Commission identify the source of routing problems and take corrective actions.[15] The Commission directed and delegated authority to the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) to "implement and maintain the authorization process."[16]

7. In the years after the *First Report and Order*, Bureau staff reviewed scores of direct access applications,[17] and based on lessons learned, identified gaps in the application process that could be exploited by bad actors.[18] The Commission considered ways to update the application requirements for the VoIP numbering authorization to better safeguard numbering resources and enhance the Bureau's public interest review.[19] After adopting a *Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (*First Notice*) in 2021,[20] the Commission adopted a *Second Report and Order* in 2023 to strategically update the requirements for applicants to the VoIP numbering authorization, further protecting the nation's finite numbering resources from bad actors—foreign and domestic.[21] Specifically, the Commission updated the VoIP numbering authorization process with certifications related to robocall mitigation, public safety, and national security, and required greater disclosure of ownership interests.[22]

8. Accompanying the *Second Report and Order*, the Commission also adopted a *Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* (*Second Further Notice*), seeking comment on the duties of existing direct access authorization holders whose authorizations predated the new application requirements adopted in the *Second Report and Order*.[23] Specifically, in the *Second Further Notice* we proposed to require existing interconnected VoIP direct access authorization holders to also provide the updated certifications, acknowledgments, and disclosures adopted in the *Second Report and Order* for

[14] *First VoIP Direct Access Report and Order*, 30 FCC Rcd at 6840-41, para. 2.

[15] *Id.*

[16] *Id*., at 6849, para. 22 n.70.

[17] We refer to "direct access to numbers applications" and "direct access applications" interchangeably throughout this item.

[18] *See First VoIP Direct Access Further Notice*, 36 FCC Rcd at 12912-13, paras. 10-11.

[19] *Id.* at 12913-26, paras. 13-39.

[20] *Id.* at 12929, para. 50. The Commission sought comment on how to improve the interconnected VoIP direct access application process to address the identified gaps in the direct access application process, illegal robocalling, national security, and number resource exhaust. *Id.* at 12913, para. 11. The Commission received comment from a wide range of stake holders. *See* WC Docket No. 13-97 (receiving comments from various organizations and entities, including state public utility commissions, interconnected VoIP providers, industry standards groups and trade associations, and consumer advocates).

[21] *See Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8953, 8998-99, paras. 3, 105-107.

[22] *Id*. at 8957-74 , paras. 12-44.

[23] *Id*. at 8991-95, paras. 79-92. While the Commission asked in the *First Notice* whether proposed new requirements should apply to existing authorization holders, we received limited comment on the issues. In addition, the *First Notice* did not specifically ask about applying all the new requirements adopted in the *Secord Report and Order* to existing authorization holders. *Id*. at 8991, para. 80. Additionally, the *Second Further Notice* sought comment on a proposal to require direct access applicants to disclose a list of states in which they intend to provide initial service, and on a proposal to minimize harms that may arise from bad actors that access numbering resources indirectly by holding their direct access authorization holder "partners" accountable for their actions. *See id*. at 8993-95, paras. 86-92. These matters raised in *Second Further Notice* are not addressed in this *Third Report and Order* and remain pending.

new applicants.[24] We further proposed to use the new information to determine whether a revocation of authorization, inability to obtain additional numbers, reclamation of unassigned numbers, or enforcement action may be warranted, just as if the information had been provided as part of a new application or an update or correction to their original application.[25] Finally, we proposed a deadline to file the updated information for existing authorization holders within 30 days after the effective date of an order adopting such a rule change.[26]

## III. DISCUSSION

9. After nearly a decade, protections built into the VoIP numbering authorization remain a critical defense in mitigating the risks associated with bad actors accessing numbering resources.[27] As we continue to examine the nexus between interconnected VoIP providers, robocalls, and direct access to numbers, we have identified further actions we can take to strengthen these protections. Although our current rules contain updated protections targetting illegal robocalling, spoofing, and fraud, they are only applicable to applicants seeking authorizations after the effective date of the rules appended by the 2023 *Second Report and Order*.[28] The rule changes we adopt today make certain that *all* direct access authorization holders will be subject to the same set of rules, expanding the scope of our robocall-related, national security, and public safety protections.

### A. Ensuring that All Direct Access Authorizations Serve the Public Interest

10. We revise section 52.15(g)(3) of the Commission's rules[29] to include a new requirement for all authorization holders whose authorizations were issued prior to August 8, 2024, (that is, prior to the effective date of the updated certification and information disclosure requirements adopted in the *Second Report and Order*), to file the updated required certifications and information disclosures.[30] We also adopt a 30-day deadline for these existing authorization holders to comply with the updated filing requirements, i.e., existing authorization holders must file the updated certifications and other information disclosures within 30 days of the rule changes adopted herein. The certifications require that an officer or responsible official of the company attests under penalty of perjury, pursuant to section 1.16 of the Commission's rules,[31] that all statements in the application are true and accurate.[32] Furthermore, if the new information submitted by the existing authorization holder warrants further review, or the grantee is non-compliant with filing the required information, the authorization may be suspended, terminated, or revoked.[33]

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[24] *Id.* at 8992, para. 81.

[25] *Id*. at 8992, para. 82.

[26] *Id*. at 8992, paras. 81, 83.

[27] *See First VoIP Direct Access Further Notice*, 36 FCC Rcd at 12908-09, 12918, paras. 2-4, 23.

[28] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8957, para. 10.

[29] *See infra* Appx. A, § 52.15(g)(3)(x)(A).

[30] *See FR Notice*, 89 Fed. Reg. at 64832.

[31] 47 CFR § 1.116. We also note that, by statute, any person that knowingly and willfully makes a false statement shall be fined or imprisoned or both. 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

[32] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8960-61, para. 16; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(N) ("A declaration under penalty of perjury pursuant to § 1.16 of this chapter that all statements in the application and any appendices are true and accurate. This declaration shall be executed by an officer or other authorized representative of the applicant.").

[33] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8983-85, para. 63-67; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(vii)-(ix). At this time, we will not require an interconnected VoIP provider to return its existing numbers if the Bureau revokes its VoIP numbering authorization. This creates a uniform framework for all

(continued….)

11. *Filing procedure*. We require all authorization holders filing the updated requirements or any authorization holder filing corrected information to file in the Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) through the newly established Direct Access Authorization Holder Post-Grant Communications intake docket (Inbox 52.15(x)) and via e-mail to DAA@fcc.gov, unless the Bureau specifies another method.[34] We note that the Bureau may request additional documentation as necessary.

### 1. Certifying Compliance with Robocall-Related Rules

12. More than just a nuisance, illegal robocalls continue to expose millions of American consumers to harmful risks.[35] The Commission receives more complaints about such illegal calls than about anything else—approximately 120,000 last year alone.[36] We remain committed to protecting consumers and our communication networks from bad actors who would seek to exploit numbering resources for such purposes.

13. *Robocall-related certifications*. We revise section 52.15(g)(3) of the Commission's rules to require existing VoIP numbering authorization holders[37] to certify that:

- the authorization holder will not use the numbers obtained pursuant to an interconnected VoIP provider numbering authorization to knowingly transmit, encourage, assist, or facilitate illegal robocalls, illegal spoofing, or fraud, in violation of robocall, spoofing, and deceptive telemarketing obligations under 47 CFR §§ 64.1200, 64.1604, 64.6300 *et seq.*, and 16 CFR § 310.3(b); [38]

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authorization holders. *See Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8984-85, para. 65 n.219.

[34] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8970, para. 32; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(iii).

[35] The Commission has estimated that $10.5 billion is lost annually by consumers due to illegal robocalls, not accounting for the non-quantifiable losses suffered by consumers and the erosion of confidence in the nation's telephone network. *See Caller ID Authentication First Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3263, para. 48. The Commission has also found that the potential benefits resulting from eliminating the wasted time and nuisances caused by illegal scam robocalls would exceed $3 billion annually. *Id*. at 3263, para. 47.

[36] The Commission received approximately 193,000 such complaints in 2019, 157,000 in 2020, 164,000 in 2021, and 119,000 in 2022 and in 2023. FCC, *Consumer Complaint Data Center*, https://www.fcc.gov/consumer-help-center-data (last visited Sept. 24, 2025).

[37] *See supra* n.6 (defining existing VoIP numbering authorization holders as those that obtained direct access numbering authorizations prior to August 8, 2024).

[38] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8959, para. 15; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(C). As voice service providers, interconnected VoIP providers must comply with all regulations that target illegal robocalls that are generally applicable to all voice service providers. *See* 47 CFR §§ 64.1600(r)(1), 64.6300(n)(1) (defining "voice service" as "any service that is interconnected with the public switched telephone network and that furnishes voice communications to an end user using resources from the North American Numbering Plan"); *Advanced Methods to Target and Eliminate Unlawful Robocalls*, CG Docket No. 17-59, Third Report and Order, Order on Reconsideration, and Fourth Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 35 FCC Rcd 7614, 7615 n.3 (2020) (defining "voice service provider" for the purposes of the Commission's call blocking rules as including "any entity originating, carrying, or terminating voice calls through time-division multiplexing (TDM), Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), or commercial mobile radio service (CMRS)"). Additionally, interconnected VoIP providers acting as terminating, originating, intermediate, and/or gateway providers must accordingly also comply with the specific regulations targeting illegal robocalls that are applicable to each type of provider.

- the authorization holder has fully complied with all applicable STIR/SHAKEN caller ID authentication and robocall mitigation program requirements and filed a certification in the Robocall Mitigation Database as required by 47 CFR §§ 64.6301-64.6305;[39] and
- neither the authorization holder nor any of its key personnel identified in the application are or have been subject to a Commission, law enforcement, or any regulatory agency investigation for failure to comply with any law, rule, or order, including the Commission's rules applicable to unlawful robocalls or unlawful spoofing.[40]

14. As with the *Second Report and Order*, we received broad support from governmental entities and other organizations for adding robocall-specific certifications for existing authorization holders.[41] One commenter observed that our proposal "would create a uniform understanding of the information reviewed by the Commission prior to approval and would prevent inadvertent competitive advantages for providers that were potentially subject to lower standards of review."[42] We agree. While other commenters opposed the robocall-related certifications, we did not receive new opposition based on extending the requirements to existing authorization holders, but a reiteration of the same grounds in the *Second Report and Order*, e.g., that they are burdensome, ineffective, etc.[43] We disagree. We are not placing new obligations on all direct access authorization holders, but instead are now creating parity with all authorization holders by requiring the former (pre-August 2024) VoIP numbering authorization holders[44] to certify that they will comply, or have complied, with certain requirements.[45] Importantly, as

[39] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8959, para. 15; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(D).

[40] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8959-60, para. 15; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(K).

[41] *See generally*, WC Docket Nos. 13-97, 07-243, 20-67; Numeracle Comments at 2-3 ("Numeracle agrees with the Commission's proposal to require existing interconnected VoIP direct access authorization holders to comply with the new disclosure obligations[.] Aligning the requirements across existing and future authorization holders is necessary to ensure competitive neutrality and for enforcement practicality. Establishing two classes of service providers with incongruent sets of ongoing requirements may provide competitive advantages for providers with less restrictive requirements—and back-doors for potential bad actors."); Maine Public Utilities Commission Reply Comments at 3-4 ("MPUC believes that existing direct access authorization holders whose authorizations predate the new application requirements must also comply with the Commission's rules set forth in the Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and disclose a list of states in which they seek to provide initial service."); NASUCA Reply Comments at 1-2, 7 ("NASUCA applauds the Commission's diligent efforts over the last several years to combat the issues that allowed the voice network to become vulnerable to bad actors and allowed illegal robocalls to 'continue to expose millions of consumers to harmful risks.' In this proceeding, NASUCA supports the Commission's rulings in the Second Report and Order 'to modify its rules and policies regarding direct access to numbers by providers of interconnected Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services,' and to further 'adopt guardrails to protect national security and law enforcement, safeguard the nation's finite numbering resources, reduce the opportunity for regulatory arbitrage and further promote public safely.'").

[42] Numeracle Comment at 3.

[43] *See e.*g., VON Comments at 2 ("VON opposes the proposed rules as unnecessary, burdensome and anticompetitive. . . . The Second Further Notice again asks whether existing interconnected VoIP numbering authorization holders should be required to comply with certification obligations adopted in the Second Report and Order for new applicants. VON opposed this proposal when raised in response to the Further Notice and opposes it again on the same grounds.").

[44] *See supra* n.6 (defining existing VoIP numbering authorization holders as those that obtained direct access numbering authorizations prior to August 8, 2024).

[45] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8961-62, para. 16-17.

some of the authorizations date from 2016, it is important to ensure that all authorization holders are equally compliant with our requirements and fully aware of important robocall related obligations enacted since they first obtained their VoIP numbering authorizations.[46] Additionally, since the adoption of these requirements for new applications in 2023, the Bureau has processed 17 applications containing these certification requirements, indicating that these applicants did not find the certifications overly burdensome, and that the requirements have not had an anticompetitive effect.[47] Additionally, if these requirements have discouraged any applicants that could not meet the certification requirements from applying in the first place, that indicates the process is working as intended as the Commission could not reasonably grant authorizations to parties that could not meet such basic and necessary certifications.

### 2. Enhanced Disclosure and Review of Ownership and Control of Applicants

15. The Commission long has recognized that "[i]llegal robocalling often originates from sources outside the United States,"[48] and that "illegal robocalls that originate abroad are a significant part of that robocall problem."[49] Particularly, "international gateway traffic is a significant source of

[46] Numeracle Comments at 3.

[47] *See* Application of Bandwidth for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 24-127 (filed Apr. 16, 2024), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/1041606365246l5 (Granted); Application of Verification Technologies, LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 24-132 (filed Apr. 19, 2024), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/1041913919441 (Granted); Application of ALLO Communications, LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 24-135 (filed Apr. 30, 2024), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10123087686701 (Granted); Application of TDS Broadband Service, LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 24-156 (filed May 17, 2024), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/1001928723782 (Granted); Application of TDS Metrocom, LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 24-502 (filed Oct. 11, 2024), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/1011221676846 (Granted); Application of AM Communication Labs, Inc. for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 24-628 (filed Oct. 30, 2024), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/1030706524516 (Granted); Application of Telimize LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 24-656 (filed Nov. 25, 2024), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/1126187022296 (Granted); Application of Ahoi LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 25-12 (filed Jan. 14, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10116040870060 (Granted); Application of E. Ritter Communications, LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 25-154 (filed Mar. 21, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10321032234229 (Granted); Application of Cornfield Voice LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 25-155 (filed Apr. 01, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10401230904164 (Granted); Application of ConnectTo Communications, Inc. for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 25-112 (filed Feb. 26, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10308281672976 (Dismissed); Application of NumberBarn, LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 19-99 (filed Apr. 10, 2019), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10711733719281 (Pending); Application of DayStarr LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 25-118 (filed Feb. 28, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10415330229543 (Pending); Application of Dialwave, Inc. for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 25-204 (filed Jun. 24, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10624283806824 (Pending); Application of ULEC, LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 25-226 (filed Jul. 03, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/1070355615917 (Pending); Application of X-Nets Inc. for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 25-258 (filed Sept. 08, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10908908211884 (Pending); Application of Comcast Phone of California, LLC for Authorization to Obtain Numbering Resources, WC Docket No. 25-297 (filed Sept. 19, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/109191737824550 (Pending).

[48] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8962-63, para. 19.

[49] *Id.*

fraudulent traffic."[50] In the *Second Report and Order*, we adopted rules requiring the disclosure of ownership and control of applicants for the VoIP numbering authorization, enabling greater transparency into who is seeking access to numbering resources and if foreign ownership is involved.[51] We now extend those same requirements to all existing authorization holders, to provide a comprehensive view of the VoIP numbering authorization program and thwart foreign bad actors seeking to circumvent our rules. Extending these critical reporting and disclosure requirements to all VoIP numbering authorization holders will provide vital transparency into our oversight of international gateway traffic.

16. *Ownership and control information disclosures.* We revise section 52.15(g)(3) of the Commission's rules to require existing VoIP numbering authorization holders to update their filings by providing the same information, disclosures, and certifications required by § 63.18(h) and (i).[52] If the authorization holder does not have information required to be provided under sections 63.18(h) and (i), the authorization holder must include a certified statement to that effect.[53] If the updated ownership information submitted by an existing authorization holder indicates a material change or discloses new information such that additional investigation is necessary to confirm that the authorization still serves the public interest, the Bureau has delegated authority to direct the Numbering Administrator, pursuant to its applicable procedures, to suspend all pending and future requests for numbers while an investigation or referral for Executive Branch agencies' review is warranted.[54]

17. *Duty to update ownership information.* In the *Second Report and Order*, we adopted changes to our rules requiring interconnected VoIP providers that obtain direct access authorization under the revised rules to submit an update to the Commission and each applicable state within 30 days of any change to the reportable ownership information.[55] This includes an ongoing duty to update information when there are changes in ownership or control of the authorization holder, as required under our rules.[56] The Commission may use the updated contact information, certifications, or ownership or affiliation information to determine whether a change in authorization status is warranted.

18. Similar to the record for robocall-related certifications, many commenters support equal application of ownership and control disclosure requirements among all applicants and authorization holders.[57] Some commenters maintain their general opposition to additional requirements, but do not

[50] *Id.*

[51] *Id.*

[52] *Id*. at 8965, para. 21; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(L).

[53] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8964-65, para. 21; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(L).

[54] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8970, para. 34. We reiterate that at this time, we will not require an interconnected VoIP provider to return its existing numbers if the Bureau revokes its VoIP numbering authorization. This creates a uniform framework for all authorization holders. *See id*., 38 FCC Rcd at 8984-85, para. 65 n.219.

[55] *Id*. at 8968, para. 28; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(x)(A). An applicable state is each state where the provider has acquired or applied to receive numbers from the state at the time of the ownership change. *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8968, para. 28.

[56] 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(x)(A). ("Regarding ownership information, if the holders of equity and/or voting interests in the provider change such that a provider that previously did not have reportable ownership or control information under paragraph (g)(3)(ii)(L) of this section now has reportable ownership or control information, or there is a change to the reportable ownership or control information the provider previously reported under paragraph (g)(3)(ii)(L), the provider must file a correction with the Commission and each applicable state within thirty (30) days of the change to its ownership or control information.").

[57] *See supra* n. 41.

distinguish a specific burden for existing authorization holders as opposed to applicants.[58] We maintain that the public interest benefit of a requirement to keep all ownership data up to date across all VoIP numbering authorizations outweighs the minimal burden on existing grantees.[59] We also continue to cross-reference the ownership and control information reporting requirements to ensure consistency with other Commission licensing applications (e.g., international section 214 applications), and to minimize confusion and administrative burden on filers.[60] Strengthening our rules and empowering Commission staff with the necessary information to appropriately evaluate all VoIP numbering authorizations on an ongoing basis is critical to our mission and the ongoing fight against illegal calls.

### 3. Certifying Compliance with Other Commission Rules

19. In the *Second Report and Order*, we adopted additional certifications for applicants of the VoIP numbering authorization that were designed to illustrate the applicant's compliance with other important Commission rules enhancing public safety, preventing access stimulation and intercarrier compensation abuse, and ensuring that the Commission's broadband maps are accurate.[61] By extending these additional certifications to existing authorization holders, we not only ensure grantees are aware of and complying with other important applicable Commission requirements but also increase our enforcement capabilities should authorization holders fall short of their obligations.

20. We revise section 52.15(g)(3) of the Commission's rules to require existing VoIP numbering authorization holders to update their filings with the following:

- a certification with accompanying evidence that the authorization holder complies with its 911 obligations under Part 9 of the Commission's rules—which include Next Generation 911 requirements—and that it complies with the provisions of the Communications Assistance with Law Enforcement Act, 47 U.S.C. 1001 *et seq.*;[62]
- a certification that the authorization holder complies with the Access Stimulation rules under § 51.914;[63]
- proof that the authorization holder has filed FCC Forms 477 and 499, or a statement explaining why each such form is not yet applicable.[64]

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[58] *Id.*; *see also* CCA Comments at 3 ("[T]he Alliance had expressed concerns regarding the requirement that VoIP provider update the Commission whenever there was any change in the ownership information . . . . The Alliance reiterates its concern that this requirement, unless qualified by some materiality standard, is overly burdensome and unrelated to forwarding any legitimate Commission interest.").

[59] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8969, para. 31.

[60] *Id.* at 8964-66, para. 21-22; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(L) (cross referencing 47 CFR § 63.18(h)-(i)).

[61] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8970, para. 36.

[62] *Id.* at 8970-71, para. 37; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(E) ("We reiterate that the Bureau or other Commission staff may request additional documentation from the applicant to demonstrate compliance with these obligations, where necessary[.]"). Regarding CALEA, we remind VoIP providers of their existing obligation to electronically file CALEA System Security and Integrity plans with the FCC before commencing service consistent with 47 CFR Part 1, Subpart Z.

[63] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8971-72, para. 40; 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(F).

[64] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8973-74, para. 44 ("We continued to note that submission of FCC Forms 477 and 499 filing receipts would constitute *prima facie* evidence of compliance with our rules."); 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(I). The FCC Form 477 filing system is no longer being used to collect new FCC Form 477 submissions, and remains open only for filers to make corrections to existing

(continued….)

21. We reiterate here that holders of all Commission authorizations, including the VoIP numbering authorization, have a clear and demonstrable duty to operate in the public interest.[65] Where the Commission grants a right or privilege, it unquestionably has the right to revoke or deny that right or privilege in appropriate circumstances.[66] In the *Second Report and Order*, we adopted rules concerning the grounds for revocation and/or termination of a VoIP numbering authorization.[67] We also delegated authority to the Wireline and Enforcement Bureaus to direct the Numbering Administrator to suspend the authorization holder's access to new numbering resources in certain circumstances and following required procedures.[68] Those same enforcement mechanisms shall now apply to all VoIP numbering applicants and authorization holders, including the existing authorization holders submitting the updated requirements as adopted today. If, upon review, Commission staff determine that an existing authorization holder is non-compliant with submitting the updated requirements, or if the information submitted is deemed insufficient, or raises questions as to whether the authorization still serves the public interest, then the authorization status may be reviewed, leading to possible suspension, termination, and/or revocation, as necessary.

22. One commenter supported the denial of new numbering requests, but only in instances of material risk to national security or if it is likely to perpetuate the origination of illegal robocalling.[69] We disagree and reaffirm that the Wireline and Enforcement Bureaus have delegated authority to suspend an authorization holder's access to new numbering resources in certain circumstances pending an investigation and following required procedures.[70] While in the course of considering suspension, we should take into account specific concerns about national security or unlawful robocalling, but willful violations of Commission rules or other concerns to public health, interest or safety will also be evaluated and may warrant a suspension of VoIP numbering authorization.

### B. Costs and Benefits

23. The rules we adopt in this *Third Report and Order* generally reflect a mandate from the TRACED Act to reduce access to numbers by potential perpetrators of illegal robocalls. We conclude that the expected benefits will exceed the costs, which are minimal. The Commission found in the *Caller ID Authentication First Report and Order* that widespread deployment of the STIR/SHAKEN framework will increase its effectiveness for both voice service providers and their subscribers, producing a potential annual benefit floor of $13.5 billion due to the reduction in nuisance calls and fraud.[71] In addition, the Commission identified many non-quantifiable benefits, such as restoring confidence in incoming calls[72]

(Continued from previous page)
FCC Form 477 filings for data as of June 30, 2022 and earlier. *Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection*; *Modernizing the FCC Form 477 Data Program*, WC Docket Nos. 19-195 and 11-10, Order, FCC 22-93 at 6, para. 13 (Dec. 9, 2022).

[65] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8969, para. 66.

[66] *Id.*

[67] *Id.* at 8983-84, 63-64, n.214 ("The Commission uses the term 'termination' where an authorization is terminated based on the authorization holder's failure to comply with a condition of the authorization, and has determined that the procedures applicable to termination need not mirror the procedures used for revocation of authorizations."); 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ix).

[68] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8984-85, para. 65.

[69] ATIS Reply Comments at 3.

[70] *See* 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(viii).

[71] *Caller ID Authentication First Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3263, paras. 47-48.

[72] *Id.* at 3263-64, paras. 49-50.

and ensuring reliable access to emergency and healthcare communications.[73] Consistent with the TRACED Act, the rules we adopt in this *Third Report and Order* are intended to help unlock those benefits. As the Commission has noted, an overall reduction in illegal robocalls will greatly lower network costs by eliminating both the unwanted traffic and the labor costs of handling numerous customer complaints.[74] The certifications and disclosures we adopt should place minimal burdens on interconnected VoIP providers[75], and our formalization of the application review process should impose small costs on Commission staff. We therefore conclude that the rules we adopt in this *Third Report and Order* will impose only a minimal cost on direct access applicants while having the overall effect of materially lowering network costs and raising consumer benefits.

### C. Legal Authority

24. As established in the *Second Report and Order*, section 251(e) of the Act provides sufficient authority for the requirements adopted in this *Third Report and Order*, and section 6(a) of the TRACED Act provides both supplemental and independent authority for those requirements specifically related to fighting illegal robocalls.[76]

25. Section 251(e)(1) of the Act grants the Commission "exclusive jurisdiction over those portions of the North American Numbering Plan that pertain to the United States."[77] Based on this grant, in the *VoIP Direct Access Order*, the Commission concluded that section 251(e)(1) provided it with authority "to extend to interconnected VoIP providers both the rights and obligations associated with using telephone numbers."[78] The Commission also has relied on section 251(e)(1) to require interconnected and one-way VoIP providers to implement the STIR/SHAKEN caller ID authentication framework and allow customers to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by dialing 988.[79] Consistent with the Commission's well-established reliance on section 251(e) numbering authority with respect to interconnected VoIP providers, we conclude that section 251(e)(1) allows us to further refine

[73] *Id.* at 3265-66, paras. 52-53.

[74] *Id.*

[75] We estimate that the burden to providers to be less than $500,000. We arrive at this total by using $58 per hour multiplied by an estimated four hours of labor multiplied by 1,900 providers. Consistent with the Commission's calculations in Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) statements, we estimate the median hourly wage for support staff (paralegals and legal assistants) as $40. To account for estimated benefits, we add 45% for a total hourly labor cost of $58. We arrive at four hours of labor by assuming the provider will need one hour for each major priority outlined in the certifications, and therefore it will take four hours to ensure they are in compliance with the: robocall-related certifications, other Commission rules for VoIP providers, relevant state laws, as well as tracking their foreign ownership information. According to the most recent Voice Telephone Services Report, there are approximately 1,900 providers reporting interconnected VoIP subscriptions. Therefore, even if every provider with interconnected VoIP opted to obtain numbering resources directly and are required to submit a certification, the total costs would be approximately $440,800 (which is equal to 1,900 multiplied by $232).

[76] The *First VoIP Direct Access Further Notice* proposed concluding that our authority for adopting the new or revised direct access to numbers application requirements for interconnected VoIP providers arises from section 251(e) of the Act and section 6(a) of the TRACED Act. *First VoIP Direct Access Further Notice*, 36 FCC Rcd at 12926-28, paras. 42-43. No commenter opposed these proposals regarding the basis for our legal authority to adopt the requirements described in the *Second Report and Order*. *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8990, para. 75.

[77] 47 U.S.C. § 251(e)(1).

[78] *First VoIP Direct Access Order*, 30 FCC Rcd at 6878, para. 78.

[79] *See Implementation of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018*, WC Docket No. 18-336, Report and Order, 35 FCC Rcd 7373, 7394, para. 40 (2020); *Caller ID Authentication First Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3260-61, para. 42.

our processes and requirements governing direct access to numbers by interconnected VoIP providers.

26. We further conclude that section 6(a) of the TRACED Act provides us with separate, additional authority to adopt our proposals related to fighting illegal robocalls. Section 6(a)(1) gives the Commission authority "to determine how Commission policies regarding access to number resources, including number resources for toll free and non-toll free telephone numbers, could be modified, including by establishing registration and compliance obligations," and to "take sufficient steps to know the identity of the customers of such providers [of voice services], to help reduce access to numbers by potential perpetrators of violations of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 227(b))."[80]

27. The Commission commenced the required proceeding pursuant to the TRACED Act in March 2020,[81] and expanded on those inquiries in the *VoIP Direct Access Further Notice*. Section 6(a)(2) of the TRACED Act states that "[i]f the Commission determines under paragraph (1) that modifying the policies described in that paragraph could help achieve the goal described in that paragraph, the Commission shall prescribe regulations to implement those policy modifications."[82] We conclude that section 6(a) of the TRACED Act, in directing us to prescribe regulations implementing policy changes to reduce access to numbers by potential perpetrators of illegal robocalls, provides an independent basis to adopt certain of the rule changes we are making to the direct access process with respect to fighting unlawful robocalls.

## IV. FURTHER NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

28. In the accompanying *Third Report and Order*, we continued to strengthen our direct access rules to protect consumers and our nation's communication networks from bad actors that would misuse our finite numbering resources. As bad actors continue to seek new and creative methods for exploiting consumers and causing harm, so must we think outside of the box to bolster our safeguards against those who engage in illegal robocalling, fraud, and abuse. By this *Third Further Notice*, we seek comment on ways we can continue to leverage VoIP numbering authorizations and access to numbers in the fight against illegal robocalling and unacceptable national security threats.

29. First, we seek to refresh the record on the feasibility and impacts of reclaiming numbering resources obtained directly from the Numbering Administrators by interconnected VoIP providers when the Commission has revoked or terminated their VoIP numbering authorization or when the provider is no longer providing services due to bankruptcy or other critical circumstances.[83] What are the costs and benefits of such action? Would the disruptions to end-users outweigh the potential benefits? What are the possible ways to mitigate impacts on end-users and consumers? We also seek comment on the potential process the Commission might use to reclaim numbers and on ways to operationally

[80] TRACED Act § 6(a)(1); *see also* 47 U.S.C. § 227(b) (restricting the making of telemarketing calls and the use of automatic telephone dialing systems and artificial or prerecorded voice messages).

[81] *Caller ID Authentication First Report and Order*, 35 FCC Rcd at 3492-96, paras. 123-30.

[82] TRACED Act § 6(a)(2).

[83] *See Numbering Policies for Modern Communications et al*., WC Docket Nos. 13-97 at al., Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 36 FCC Rcd 12907, 12924-25, para. 37 (2021) ("The Commission may revoke direct access to numbers for failure to comply with the Commission's numbering rules."); *see also Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8983, para. 63 ("[T]he Commission may revoke and/or terminate direct access to numbers authorizations of interconnected VoIP providers for failure to comply with the Communications Act of 1934, as amended and its implementing rules, other applicable laws and regulations, and/or where retention of those authorizations no longer serves the public interest."); *see id* n.214 ("The Commission uses the term 'termination' where an authorization is terminated based on the authorization holder's failure to comply with a condition of the authorization, and has determined that the procedures applicable to termination need not mirror the procedures used for revocation of authorizations.").

facilitate numbering resource reclamation, particularly for numbers assigned to end-users. Would porting numbers to a designated alternative provider and establishing a numbering partner[84] to maintain service to existing customers be a viable solution and what would that entail? Are there alternatives to number reclamation that would be less disruptive but also provide adequate safeguards to numbering resources as well as meaningful enforcement mechanisms? We seek comment on related conclusions in the NANC's 2024 report, which analyzed similar questions related to number reclamation pursuant to the *Second Report and Order*.[85]

30. We also seek comment on whether the Commission should restrict VoIP numbering authorizations or reevaluate existing authorizations for certain entities that may threaten national security, for example, entities identified on the Commission's Covered List (generally, entities whose equipment and/or services have been deemed to pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States or to the security and safety of United States persons, as well as those entities' affiliates and subsidiaries).[86] Another example would be entities who have had their international and/or domestic section 214 authorizations revoked on national security or law enforcement grounds. Should such entities be denied VoIP numbering authorizations? If we were to adopt these further restrictions, should we limit the prohibition to entities whose services, rather than equipment, is identified on the Covered List, or whose domestic or international section 214 authority (or that of its affiliate or subsidiary) has been denied or revoked on national security or law enforcement grounds? As we recently reiterated, "communications equipment and services on the FCC's Covered List have been determined to pose unacceptable risks to the national security of the United States and its citizens."[87] What are the potential benefits of such a restriction for both reducing illegal robocalls and improving strengthening the security of the nation's networks? Are there any harms or unintended impacts that would outweigh the benefits? What are the consequences of this restriction on providers and consumers?

31. Lastly, we also seek comment on whether the Commission should restrict a VoIP numbering authorization or reevaluate an existing authorization should it discover "covered" equipment in the interconnected VoIP provider's network. What are the potential costs and benefits of such a proposal? Should there be a time period considered for reporting "covered" equipment in a network before any potential restrictions on VoIP numbering authorizations take effect? Should the Commission adopt an additional certification requirement regarding the use of "covered" equipment or services by applicants and existing authorization holders? Should existing authorization holders (that is, those granted prior to the effective date of the contemplated certification requirement) be required to make these certifications? Are there circumstances or situations that should be taken into consideration? Would such a proposal create any unintended consequences? Are there any reporting and transparency impacts that might outweigh our proposal? Would this have impacts that are not technology-neutral or

[84] "Numbering partner" refers to the carrier partner from where an interconnected VoIP provider obtains numbering resources. *See* North American Numbering Council, Numbering Administration Oversight Working Group, Direct Access: Final Report and Recommendation at 25 (2024), https://www.fcc.gov/files/naowg-direct-access-report-12-13-24 (NANC Report); *see also Telephone Number Requirements for IP-Enabled Services Providers et al*., WC Docket Nos. 07-243 et al., 22 FCC Rcd 19531, 19540, para. 17 n.48 (2007).

[85] NANC Report at 19-23.

[86] As the Commission has previously explained, "[e]ntities 'identified on the Covered List' generally includes entities named on the Covered List and such entities' affiliates and subsidiaries." *Protecting Against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain through the Equipment Authorization Program*, ET Docket No. 21-232, Second Report & Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 25-71, para. 81 n.278 (rel. Oct. 29, 2025) (*EA Security Second R&O and FNPRM*).

[87] *Reminder: Communications Equipment and Services on the Covered List Pose an Unacceptable Risk to National Security*, Public Notice, WC Docket No. 18-89 et al., DA 25-927, 2025 WL 2646940 (OMR, PSHSB Oct. 14, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/document/national-security-advisory-regarding-covered-list-security-risks.

disproportionately impact interconnected VoIP providers and/or small providers? Would there be any unintended consequences for technology transitions, implementation of STIR/SHAKEN Caller ID authentications, or other Commission priorities? Finally, are there other proposals that we should consider regarding national security protections and direct access to numbering resources?

## V. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

32. *Regulatory Flexibility Act*. The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, as amended (RFA),[88] requires that an agency prepare a regulatory flexibility analysis for notice and comment rulemakings, unless the agency certifies that "the rule will not, if promulgated, have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities."[89] Accordingly, the Commission has prepared a Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) concerning the possible impact of the rule changes contained in this *Third Report and Order* on small entities. The FRFA is set forth in Appendix B.

33. The Commission has also prepared an Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) concerning the potential impact of rule and policy change proposals on small entities in the *Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*. The IRFA is set forth in Appendix C. The Commission invites the general public, in particular small businesses, to comment on the IRFA. Comments must be filed by the deadlines for comments on the *Third Further Notice* indicated on the first page of this document and must have a separate and distinct heading designating them as responses to the IRFA.

34. *Paperwork Reduction Act*. This document may contain new or modified information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), Public Law 104-13. Specifically, the rules adopted in 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(x) may require new or modified information collections. All such new or modified information collection requirements will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review under Section 3507(d) of the PRA. OMB, the general public, and other Federal agencies will be invited to comment on the new or modified information collection requirements contained in this proceeding. In addition, we note that pursuant to the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002, Public Law 107-198, *see* 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(4), we previously sought specific comment on how the Commission might further reduce the information collection burden for small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees. In this document, we describe several steps we have taken to minimize the information collection burdens on small entities.[90]

35. The *Third Further Notice* also may contain proposed new and revised information collection requirements. The Commission, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork burdens, invites the general public and OMB to comment on the information collection requirements contained in this document, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. In addition, pursuant to the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002, Public Law 107-198, *see* 44 U.S.C § 3506(c)(4), we seek specific comment on how we might further reduce the information collection burden for small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees.

36. *Congressional Review Act*. The Commission has determined, and the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, OMB, concurs, that this rule is non-major under the Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. § 804(2). The Commission will send a copy of this *Third Report and Order* and *Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* to Congress and the Government Accountability Office pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 801(a)(1)(A).

37. *Providing Accountability Through Transparency Act*. Consistent with the Providing

[88] 5 U.S.C. §§ 601 *et seq*., as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act (SBREFA), Pub. L. No. 104-121, 110 Stat. 847 (1996).

[89] *Id.* § 605(b).

[90] *See infra* Appx. B at paras. 25-28.

Accountability Through Transparency Act, Public Law 118-9, a summary of the *Third Further Notice* will be available on https://www.fcc.gov/proposed-rulemakings.

38. *OPEN Government Data Act*. The OPEN Government Data Act,[91] requires agencies to make "public data assets" available under an open license and as "open Government data assets," *i.e.*, in machine-readable, open format, unencumbered by use restrictions other than intellectual property rights, and based on an open standard that is maintained by a standards organization.[92] This requirement is to be implemented "in accordance with guidance by the Director" of OMB.[93] The term "public data asset" means "a data asset, or part thereof, maintained by the Federal Government that has been, or may be, released to the public, including any data asset, or part thereof, subject to disclose under [the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)]."[94] A "data asset" is "a collection of data elements or data sets that may be grouped together,"[95] and "data" is "recorded information, regardless of form or the media on which the data is recorded."[96] We delegate authority to the Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB), in consultation with the agency's Chief Data and Analytics Officer and after seeking public comment to the extent it deems appropriate, to determine whether any data assets maintained or created by the Commission pursuant to the rules adopted in the *Third Report and Order* are "public data assets" and if so, to determine when and to what extent such information should be published as "open Government data assets." In doing so, WCB shall take into account the extent to which such data asserts should be made publicly available because they are not subject to disclosure under the FOIA. *See, e.g.,* 5 U.S.C. § 552(B)(4), (6)-(7) (exemptions concerning confidential commercial information, personal privacy, and information compiled for law enforcement purposes, respectively).

39. *Comment Period and Filing Procedures.* Pursuant to sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's rules, 47 CFR §§ 1.415, 1.419, interested parties may file comments and reply comments on or before the dates indicated on the first page of this document. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS). *See Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, 63 FR 24121 (1998).

- Electronic Filers: Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing ECFS: https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs.
- Paper Filers: Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing.
  - Filings can be sent by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail. **All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission**.
  - Hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary are accepted between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. by the FCC's mailing contractor at 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701. All hand

[91] Congress enacted the OPEN Government Data Act as Title II of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019), §§ 201-202.

[92] 44 U.S.C. §§ 3502(20), (22) (definitions of "open Government data asset" and "public data asset"), 3506(b)(6)(B) (public availability).

[93] *See* OMB Memorandum M-25-05, *Phase 2 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Open Government Data Access and Management Guidance* (Jan. 15, 2025).

[94] 44 U.S.C. § 3502(22).

[95] 44 U.S.C. § 3502(17).

[96] 44 U.S.C. § 3502(16).

deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes and boxes must be disposed of before entering the building.

- Commercial courier deliveries (any delivers not by the U.S. Postal Service) must be sent to 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701.
- Filings sent by U.S. Postal Service First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Mail Express must be sent to 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554.

40. Comments and reply comments must include a short and concise summary of the substantive arguments raised in the pleasing. Comments and reply comments must also comply with section 1.49 and all other applicable sections of the Commission's rules. We direct all interested parties to include the name of the filing party and the date of the filing on each page of their comments and reply comments. All parties are encouraged to use a table of contents, regardless of the length of their submissions. We also strongly encourage parties to track the organization set forth in the *Third Further Notice* in order to facilitate our internal review process.

41. *People with Disabilities*. To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530.

42. *Ex Parte Presentations—Permit-But-Disclose.* The proceeding this *Third Further Notice* initiates shall be treated as a "permit-but-disclose" proceeding in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.[97] Persons making *ex parte* presentations must file a copy of any written presentation or a memorandum summarizing any oral presentation within two business days after the presentation (unless a different deadline applicable to the Sunshine period applies). Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentation must (1) list all persons attending or otherwise participating in the meeting at which the *ex parte* presentation was made, and (2) summarize all data presented and arguments made during the presentation. If the presentation consisted in whole or in part of the presentation of data or arguments already reflected in the presenter's written comments, memoranda or other filings in the proceeding, the presenter may provide citations to such data or arguments in his or her prior comments, memoranda, or other filings (specifying the relevant page and/or paragraph numbers where such data or arguments can be found) in lieu of summarizing them in the memorandum. Documents shown or given to Commission staff during *ex parte* meetings are deemed to be written *ex parte* presentations and must be filed consistent with section 1.1206(b) of the Commission's rules. In proceedings governed by section 1.49(f) of the Commission's rules or for which the Commission has made available a method of electronic filing, written *ex parte* presentations and memoranda summarizing oral *ex parte* presentations, and all attachments thereto, must be filed through the electronic comment filing system available for that proceeding, and must be filed in their native format (*e.g.*, .doc, .xml, .ppt, searchable .pdf). Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.[98]

43. *Availability of Documents.* Comments, reply comments, and *ex parte* submissions will be publicly available online via ECFS.

44. *Further Information*. For further information, contact Jordan Reth, at (202) 418-1418 or Jordan.Reth@fcc.gov or DAA@fcc.gov.

## VI. ORDERING CLAUSES

45. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that pursuant to sections 1, 3, 4, 201-205, 251, and 303(r) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 151, 153, 154, 201-205, 251, 303(r), and section 6(a) of the TRACED Act, Pub. L. No. 116-105, § 6(a)(1)-(2), 133 Stat. 3274, 3277 (2019), 47

[97] 47 CFR §§ 1.1200 *et seq.*

[98] *Id.* § 1.49(f).

U.S.C. § 227b-1, the *Third Report and Order and Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* hereby IS ADOPTED and Part 52 of the Commission's Rules, 47 CFR Part 52, IS AMENDED as set forth in Appendix A.[99] The *Third Report and Order* shall become effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register. The changes to section 52.15(g)(3)(x) adopted herein may contain new or modified information collection requirements subject to OMB review under the Paperwork Reduction Act. The Commission directs the Wireline Competition Bureau to announce the compliance date for those requirements in a document published in the Federal Register after the completion of OMB review and to cause section 52.15(g)(3)(x) to be revised accordingly.

46. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Commission's Office of the Secretary, SHALL SEND a copy of this *Third Report and Order and Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, including the Final and Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analyses, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Advocacy.

47. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Office of the Managing Director, Performance Evaluation and Records Management, SHALL SEND a copy of this *Third Report and Order* in a report to be sent to Congress and the Government Accountability Office pursuant to the Congressional Review Act, see 5 U.S.C. § 801(a)(1)(A).

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary

[99] Pursuant to Executive Order 14215, 90 Fed. Reg. 10447 (Feb. 20, 2025), this regulatory action has been determined to be not significant under Executive Order 12866, 58 Fed. Reg. 68708 (Dec. 28, 1993).

## APPENDIX A

## Final Rules

The Federal Communications Commission amends part 52 of Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

**PART 52 – NUMBERING**

1. The authority citation for part 52 is revised to read as follows:

**Authority:** 47 U.S.C. 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 201-205, 207-209, 218, 225-227, 227b-1, 251-252, 271, 303, 332, unless otherwise noted.

2. Amend § 52.15 by revising paragraph (g)(3)(x)(D) and adding new paragraphs (g)(3)(x)(E) and (F) to read as follows:

**§ 52.15 Central office code administration.**

* * * * *

(D) Provide accurate regulatory and numbering contact information to each state commission when requesting numbers in that state; and

(E) File updated certifications and ownership and control disclosures under paragraphs (g)(3)(ii)(C) through (F), (I), (K), (L), and (N) of this section if the authorization obtained under this section was granted before August 8, 2024.

(F) Paragraph (g)(3)(x)(E) of this section contains a new information-collection requirement. Compliance with paragraph (g)(3)(x)(E) will not be required until this paragraph (g)(3)(x)(F) is removed or contains a compliance date, which will not occur until after review of such requirement by the Office of Management and Budget pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act.

* * * * *

## APPENDIX B

## Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

1. As required by the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, as amended (RFA),[100] the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) incorporated an Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) in the *Numbering Policies for Modern Communications, et al*., released in September 2023.[101] The Commission sought written public comment on the proposals in the *Third Report and Order*, including comment on the IFRA. No comments were filed addressing the IRFA. This Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) conforms to the RFA and it (or summaries thereof) will be published in the Federal Register.[102]

### A. Need for, and Objectives of, the Rules

1. The *Third Report and Order* takes important steps aimed at stemming the tide of illegal robocalls perpetrated by interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providers and protecting the nation's numbering resources from abuse by foreign bad actors by strategically updating the Commission's rules regarding how such providers obtain nationwide authorization for direct access to our nation's limited numbering resources.

2. The *Third Report and Order* requires existing interconnected VoIP providers with numbering authorizations that predate the rule change adopted in the *Second Report and Order* to make the updated robocall-related, public safety and national security certifications and information disclosures as adopted in the *Second Report and Order*.[103] Specifically, the *Third Report and Order* will amend 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(x), which outlines conditions applicable to all interconnected VoIP providers with numbering authorizations to include a new subsection that requires the updated certifications and information disclosures.[104] Similar in process to the new applications, filers submitting the required updates will be required to respond to requests for additional information regarding their updated filings.[105]

### B. Summary of Significant Issues Raised by Public Comments in Response to the IRFA

*3.* No comments were filed addressing the impact of the proposed rules on small entities.

### C. Response to Comments by the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration

3. Pursuant to the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, which amended the RFA,[106] the Commission is required to respond to any comments filed by the Chief Counsel for the Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Advocacy, and also provide a detailed statement of any change made to

[100] 5 U.S.C. §§ 601 *et seq*., as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act (SBREFA), Pub. L. No. 104-121, 110 Stat. 847 (1996).

[101] *Numbering Policies for Modern Communications et al*., WC Docket No. 13-97 et al., Second Report and Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 38 FCC Rcd 8951, 9015, Appx. C (2023) (*Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*).

[102] 5 U.S.C. § 604.

[103] *Second VoIP Direct Access Report and Order and Further Notice*, 38 FCC Rcd at 8957-74, paras. 11-44.

[104] *See supra* Part III.A.

[105] *Id*.

[106] Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-240, 124 Stat. 2504 (2010).

the proposed rules as a result of those comments.[107] The Chief Counsel did not file any comments in response to the proposed rules in this proceeding.

### D. Description and Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which the Rules Will Apply

4. The RFA directs agencies to provide a description of, and where feasible, an estimate of the number of small entities that may be affected by the adopted rules.[108] The RFA generally defines the term "small entity" as having the same meaning as the terms "small business," "small organization," and "small governmental jurisdiction."[109] In addition, the term "small business" has the same meaning as the term "small business concern" under the Small Business Act (SBA).[110] A "small business concern" is one which: (1) is independently owned and operated; (2) is not dominant in its field of operation; and (3) satisfies any additional criteria established by the SBA.[111] The SBA establishes small business size standards that agencies are required to use when promulgating regulations relating to small businesses; agencies may establish alternative size standards for use in such programs, but must consult and obtain approval from SBA before doing so.[112]

5. Our actions, over time, may affect small entities that are not easily categorized at present. We therefore describe three broad groups of small entities that could be directly affected by our actions.[113] In general, a small business is an independent business having fewer than 500 employees.[114] These types of small businesses represent 99.9% of all businesses in the United States, which translates to 34.75 million businesses.[115] Next, "small organizations" are not-for-profit enterprises that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their field.[116] While we do not have data regarding the number of non-profits that meet that criteria, over 99 percent of nonprofits have fewer than 500 employees.[117] Finally, "small governmental jurisdictions" are defined as cities, counties, towns, townships, villages, school districts, or special districts with populations of less than fifty thousand.[118] Based on the 2022 U.S. Census of

[107] 5 U.S.C. § 604 (a)(3).

[108] *Id*. § 604.

[109] *Id*. § 601(6).

[110] *Id*. § 601(3) (incorporating by reference the definition of "small-business concern" in the Small Business Act, 15 U.S.C. § 632). Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 601(3), the statutory definition of a small business applies "unless an agency, after consultation with the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and after opportunity for public comment, establishes one or more definitions of such term which are appropriate to the activities of the agency and publishes such definition(s) in the Federal Register."

[111] 15 U.S.C. § 632.

[112] 13 CFR 121.903.

[113] 5 U.S.C. § 601(3)-(6).

[114] *See* SBA, Office of Advocacy, *Frequently Asked Questions About Small Business* (July 23, 2024), https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Frequently-Asked-Questions-About-Small-Business_2024-508.pdf.

[115] *Id.*

[116] 5 U.S.C. § 601(4).

[117] *See* SBA, Office of Advocacy, *Small Business Facts, Spotlight on Nonprofits* (July 2019), https://advocacy.sba.gov/2019/07/25/small-business-facts-spotlight-on-nonprofits/.

[118] 5 U.S.C. § 601(5).

Governments data, we estimate that at least 48,724 out of 90,835 local government jurisdictions have a population of less than 50,000.[119]

6. The rules adopted in the *Third Report and Order* will apply to small entities in the industries identified in the chart below by their six-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)[120] codes and corresponding SBA size standard.[121] Based on currently available U.S. Census data regarding the estimated number of small firms in each identified industry, we conclude that the proposed rules will impact a substantial number of small entities. Where available, we also provide additional information regarding the number of potentially affected entities in the identified industries below.

### E. Description of Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping, and Other Compliance Requirements for Small Entities

4. The RFA directs agencies to describe the economic impact of proposed rules on small entities, as well as projected reporting, recordkeeping and other compliance requirements, including an estimate of the classes of small entities which will be subject to the requirement and the type of professional skills necessary for preparation of the report or record.[122]

5. In the *Third Report and Order*, we adopt new certification and disclosure requirements for interconnected VoIP providers that have obtain a direct access numbering authorization from the Commission. Specifically, we require existing direct access authorization holders whose authorizations predate the updated requirements adopted in the *Second Report and Order* to file the updated requirements within 30 days of the rules we adopt today becoming effective. By establishing this equal framework for all authorization holders, we ensure that our ongoing actions targeting illegal robocalling and spoofing, as well as safeguards for national security and public safety have a greater impact. The Commission anticipates the approaches it has taken to implement the requirements will have minimal or de minimis cost implications because many of these obligations are required to comply with existing Commission regulations.

6. After reviewing the record, we received no concerns about unique burdens from small businesses that would be impacted by the new certifications adopted in the *Third Report and Order*. As such, the Commission does not have sufficient information on the record to determine whether small entities will be required to hire professionals to comply with its decisions or to quantify the cost of compliance for small entities. Additional resources or personnel, however, should not be required to file these requirements because interconnected VoIP providers should already be familiar with how to make these certifications and disclosures as they are required to comply with existing Commission regulations.

### F. Steps Taken to Minimize the Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities, and Significant Alternatives Considered

7. The RFA requires an agency to provide, "a description of the steps the agency has taken

[119] *See* U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 Census of Governments –Organization, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/econ/gus/2022-governments.html, tables 1-11.

[120] The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. *See* www.census.gov/NAICS for further details regarding the NAICS codes identified in this chart.

[121] The size standards in this chart are set forth in 13 CFR 121.201, by six digit NAICS code.

[122] 5 U.S.C. § 604(a)(5).

to minimize the significant economic impact on small entities…including a statement of the factual, policy, and legal reasons for selecting the alternative adopted in the final rule and why each one of the other significant alternatives to the rule considered by the agency which affect the impact on small entities was rejected."[123]

7. The *Third Report and Order* considered alternatives that may reduce the impact of these rule changes on small entities. Some proposals were not adopted because the requirements already exist under other parts of the Commission's rules. New obligations regarding STIR/SHAKEN caller ID authentication or robocall mitigation specifically for interconnected VoIP providers were not adopted; instead applicants are required to certify compliance with preexisting rule sections. This reduces confusion and maintains accuracy should the Commission decide to revise the robocall-related dockets.

8. As discussed above, the new certification requirements in the *Third Report and Order* are minimally burdensome, as they merely require providers to certify that they are compliant with preexisting Commission rules. Our public safety and CALEA documentation submission requirement merely formalizes existing Bureau practice of requesting such information from existing direct access numbering authorization holders. Our new ownership disclosure requirement tracks requirements already imposed on providers in the section 214 context. For these reasons, we believe that small and other interconnected VoIP providers will not have an issue including these new certifications and disclosures in their direct access authorization applications.

### G. Report to Congress

8. The Commission will send a copy of the *Third Report and Order*, including this Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, in a report to Congress pursuant to the Congressional Review Act.[124] In addition, the Commission will send a copy of the *Third Report and Order*, including this Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the SBA and will publish a copy of the *Third Report and Order* and this Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (or summaries thereof) in the Federal Register.[125]

[123] *Id*. § 604(a)(6).

[124] *Id*. § 801(a)(1)(A).

[125] *Id*. § 604(b).

## APPENDIX C

## Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

1. As required by the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, as amended (RFA),[126] the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) has prepared this Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA) of the policies and rules proposed in the *Third Further Notice* assessing the possible significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The Commission requests written public comments on this IRFA. Comments must be identified as responses to the IRFA and must be filed by the deadlines for comments specified on the first page of the *Third Further Notice*. The Commission will send a copy of the *Third Further Notice*, including this IRFA, to the Chief Counsel for the Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Advocacy.[127] In addition, the *Third Further Notice* and IRFA (or summaries thereof) will be published in the Federal Register.[128]

### A. Need for, and Objectives of, the Proposed Rules

9. In the *Third Further Notice*, we continue to strengthen our direct access rules to protect consumers and our nation's communication networks from bad actors that would misuse our finite numbering resources. As bad actors continue to seek new and creative methods for exploiting consumers and causing harm, so must we think outside of the box to bolster our safeguards against those who engage in illegal robocalling, fraud, and abuse. We seek comment on ways we can continue to leverage the VoIP numbering authorization and access to numbers in the fight against illegal robocalling and unacceptable national security threats. Specifically, we first refresh the record on whether the Commission should require the reclamation of numbering resources obtained directly from the Numbering Administrators by interconnected VoIP providers whose VoIP numbering authorizations were subsequently revoked or terminated. We also seek comment on prohibiting entities identified on the Covered List (i.e. named entities and their affiliates and subsidiaries)[129] from obtaining a VoIP numbering authorization. Additionally, we seek comment on whether we should extend this prohibition to third party entities that supply, receive services from, carry traffic for, or interconnect with entities identified on the Covered List. Moreover, we seek comment on whether we should limit the prohibition to entities identified on the Covered List whose international section 214 authority (or that of its affiliate or subsidiary) was denied or revoked on national security grounds. The Commission recently reiterated, "communications equipment and services on the FCC's Covered List have been determined to pose unacceptable risks to the national security of the United States and its citizens."[130] We also request comment on the potential benefits of such a restriction for both reducing illegal robocalls and security of the nation's networks. Additionally, we seek comment on the harms or unintended impacts and whether they would outweigh the benefits. Further we seek comment on the consequences of such a restriction on providers and consumers?

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[126] 5 U.S.C. §§ 601 *et seq*., as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act (SBREFA), Pub. L. No. 104-121, 110 Stat. 847 (1996).

[127] *Id*. § 603(a).

[128] *Id.*

[129] As the Commission has previously explained, "[e]ntities 'identified on the Covered List' generally includes entities named on the Covered List and such entities' affiliates and subsidiaries." *Protecting Against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain through the Equipment Authorization Program*, ET Docket No. 21-232, Second Report & Order and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 25-71, para. 81 n.278 (rel. Oct. 29, 2025) (*EA Security Second R&O and FNPRM*).

[130] *Reminder: Communications Equipment and Services on the Covered List Pose an Unacceptable Risk to National Security*, Public Notice, WC Docket No. 18-89 et al., DA 25-927, 2025 WL 2646940 (OMR, PSHSB Oct. 14, 2025), https://www.fcc.gov/document/national-security-advisory-regarding-covered-list-security-risks.

10. We also seek comment on whether the Commission should restrict a VoIP numbering authorization or reevaluate an existing authorization if "covered" equipment is discovered in the interconnected VoIP provider's network. We request comment on the potential costs and benefits and whether there should be a time period for reporting Covered List equipment in a network before any potential restrictions on VoIP numbering authorizations take effect. Additionally, the Commission seeks comment on adopting an additional certification requirement regarding the use of Covered List equipment or services by applicants for the VoIP numbering authorization and if there are circumstances or situations that should be taken into consideration. Moreover, we seek comment on any unintended consequences, reporting and transparency impacts, and impacts that are not technology-neutral or disproportionate for interconnected VoIP providers and/or small providers. Further, we seek comment on any unintended consequences for technology transitions, implementation of STIR/SHAKEN Caller ID authentications, or other Commission priorities. Finally, we request comment on any other proposals that we should consider regarding national security protections and direct access to numbering resources.

### B. Legal Basis

11. The proposed action is authorized pursuant to sections 1, 3, 4, 201-205, 251, and 303(r) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 151, 153, 154, 201-205, 251, 303(r), and section 6(a) of the TRACED Act, Pub. L. No. 116-105, § 6(a)(1)-(2), 133 Stat. 3274, 3277 (2019), 47 U.S.C. § 227b-1.

### C. Description and Estimate of the Number of Small Entities to Which the Proposed Rules Will Apply

2. The RFA directs agencies to provide a description of and, where feasible, an estimate of the number of small entities that may be affected by the proposed rules, if adopted.[131] The RFA generally defines the term "small entity" as having the same meaning as the terms "small business," "small organization," and "small governmental jurisdiction."[132] In addition, the term "small business" has the same meaning as the term "small business concern" under the Small Business Act (SBA).[133] A "small business concern" is one which: (1) is independently owned and operated; (2) is not dominant in its field of operation; and (3) satisfies any additional criteria established by the SBA.[134] The SBA establishes small business size standards that agencies are required to use when promulgating regulations relating to small businesses; agencies may establish alternative size standards for use in such programs, but must consult and obtain approval from SBA before doing so.[135]

3. Our actions, over time, may affect small entities that are not easily categorized at present. We therefore describe three broad groups of small entities that could be directly affected by our actions.[136] In general, a small business is an independent business having fewer than 500

[131] 5 U.S.C. § 603(b)(3).

[132] *Id*. § 601(6).

[133] *Id*. § 601(3) (incorporating by reference the definition of "small-business concern" in the Small Business Act, 15 U.S.C. § 632). Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 601(3), the statutory definition of a small business applies "unless an agency, after consultation with the Office of Advocacy of the Small Business Administration and after opportunity for public comment, establishes one or more definitions of such term which are appropriate to the activities of the agency and publishes such definition(s) in the Federal Register."

[134] 15 U.S.C. § 632.

[135] 13 CFR 121.903.

[136] 5 U.S.C. § 601(3)-(6).

employees.[137] These types of small businesses represent 99.9% of all businesses in the United States, which translates to 34.75 million businesses.[138] Next, "small organizations" are not-for-profit enterprises that are independently owned and operated and not dominant their field.[139] While we do not have data regarding the number of non-profits that meet that criteria, over 99 percent of nonprofits have fewer than 500 employees.[140] Finally, "small governmental jurisdictions" are defined as cities, counties, towns, townships, villages, school districts, or special districts with populations of less than fifty thousand.[141] Based on the 2022 U.S. Census of Governments data, we estimate that at least 48,724 out of 90,835 local government jurisdictions have a population of less than 50,000.[142]

4. The rules proposed in the *Third Further Notice* will apply to small entities in the industries identified in the chart below by their six-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)[143] codes and corresponding SBA size standard.[144] Based on currently available U.S. Census data regarding the estimated number of small firms in each identified industry, we conclude that the proposed rules will impact a substantial number of small entities. Where available, we also provide additional information regarding the number of potentially affected entities in the industries identified below.

### D. Description of Economic Impact and Projected Reporting, Recordkeeping, and Other Compliance Requirements for Small Entities

5. The RFA directs agencies to describe the economic impact of proposed rules on small entities, as well as projected reporting, recordkeeping and other compliance requirements, including an estimate of the classes of small entities which will be subject to the requirements and the type of professional skills necessary for preparation of the report or record.[145]

12. In the *Third Further Notice*, the Commission seeks comment on proposals that, if adopted, will affect all interconnected VoIP providers seeking a VoIP numbering authorization with the Commission, including those that may be small entities. These proposals my create new or additional reporting or recordkeeping and/or other compliances obligations on small entities, if adopted. Specifically, the in *Third Further Notice*, we seek comment on proposals to impose additional

[137] *See* SBA, Office of Advocacy, *Frequently Asked Questions About Small Business* (July 23, 2024), https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Frequently-Asked-Questions-About-Small-Business_2024-508.pdf.

[138] *Id*.

[139] 5 U.S.C. § 601(4).

[140] *See* SBA, Office of Advocacy, *Small Business Facts, Spotlight on Nonprofits* (July 2019), https://advocacy.sba.gov/2019/07/25/small-business-facts-spotlight-on-nonprofits/.

[141] 5 U.S.C. § 601(5).

[142] *See* U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 Census of Governments –Organization, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/econ/gus/2022-governments.html, tables 1-11.

[143] The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. *See* www.census.gov/NAICS for further details regarding the NAICS codes identified in this chart.

[144] The size standards in this chart are set forth in 13 CFR 121.201, by six digit North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code.

[145] 5 U.S.C. § 603(b)(4).

certifications requirements with respect to Covered List entities or covered equipment in networks for applicants and existing authorization holders.

### E. Discussion of Significant Alternatives Considered That Minimize the Significant Economic Impact on Small Entities

6. The RFA directs agencies to provide a description of any significant alternatives to the proposed rules that would accomplish the stated objectives of applicable statutes, and minimize any significant economic impact on small entities.[146] The discussion is required to include alternatives such as: "(1) the establishment of differing compliance or reporting requirements or timetables that take into account the resources available to small entities; (2) the clarification, consolidation, or simplification of compliance and reporting requirements under the rule for such small entities; (3) the use of performance rather than design standards; and (4) an exemption from coverage of the rule, or any part thereof, for such small entities."[147]

7. In the *Third Further Notice*, the Commission continues to strengthen our direct access rules to protect consumers and our nation's communication networks from bad actors that would misuse our finite numbering resources, including for illegal robocalling or unacceptable national security threats. While doing so, the Commission seeks comment on a number of proposals related to the VoIP numbering authorization and prohibiting direct access to numbering resources for entities on the Covered List or those that have covered equipment in their interconnected VoIP service networks.

8. In evaluating the proposals in the *Third Further Notice*, the Commission will fully consider the economic impact on small entities as it evaluates the comments filed, including comments related to costs and benefits. Alternative proposals and approaches from commenters will further develop the record and could help the Commission further minimize the economic impact on small entities. The Commission's evaluation of the comments filed in this proceeding will shape the final conclusions it reaches, the final alternatives it considers, and the actions it ultimately takes to minimize any significant economic impact that may occur on small entities from the final rules.

### F. Federal Rules that May Duplicate, Overlap, or Conflict with the Proposed Rules

9. None.

[146] 5 U.S.C. § 603(c).

[147] *Id.* § 603(c)(1)-(4).