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December 8, 2009

Committees:
Government Organization
Agriculture
Health and Human
Resources
Pensions

Sandra Squire, Executive Secretary
Public Service Commission of West Virginia
201 Brooks Street
Charleston, WV 25301

Re: Case Number 09-0871-T-PC, Transfer of Verizon's local exchange and long distance business in West Virginia to Frontier Communications

Dear Executive Secretary Squire,

Verizon's proposed transfer of its local exchange and long distance business in West Virginia to Frontier Communications threatens West Virginia's economic future by placing our phone and Internet service in the hands of a financially shaky company that won't be able to keep up with our state's growing needs.

As an elected official, I am especially concerned that whatever company owns and operates the telecommunications assets of our state has sufficient resources, both human and financial, to invest in modernizing the network at a pace that will meet the rapidly evolving needs of residents, businesses and institutions throughout West Virginia.

I have personally spoken with employees from both Verizon and Frontier, who live in the district I represent, about the proposed transfer. I have not found one employee, from either company, who is for the proposed transfer.

Frontier employees had to take ten furlough days this year without pay, while outside contractors worked in the district.

The Public Service Commission must ensure that the network has the ability to deliver technologically-advanced services, including broadband, throughout West Virginia. We need a strong partner as we work to connect all of the citizens of the state to the digital economy. At the same time, it is also important to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens who rely on basic local service as a lifeline have affordable access to that service.

There are serious concerns regarding the risks associated with the transaction, in particular the large amount of debt that Frontier will incur to pay Verizon while it simultaneously plans to cut operating expenses by \$500 million a year.

Our State must not be left behind as large, regulated telecommunications companies attempt to divest themselves of their landline networks - networks that our citizens have paid for over many decades, and upon which they rely for basic living and economic activities. Verizon sold its landlines in northern New England in a similar deal to FairPoint Communications. Despite many promises for an improved network, FairPoint is now teetering on the brink of bankruptcy and service quality there has deteriorated.

In the end, the Verizon - Frontier transaction must be for the public good, and all of the serious concerns raised must be addressed in a way that protects the interest of our state and its citizens. West Virginia will be better off with Verizon than it will be with Frontier.

I strongly believe that it is not worth the risk to approve this transaction because the dangers outweigh any purported public interest benefits. I urge the Commission not to approve the sale.

Sincerely,



Ray Canterbury
Delegate, 28th District

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