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1 Protest Original (s)

**HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

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Committees:  
Banking & Insurance  
Health & Human Resources  
Judiciary

November 4, 2009

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

Dear Secretary Squire:

As you are aware, 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 will not be able to keep up with our state's growing needs.

As an elected official, I am always 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.

The Public Service Commission must ensure that the network has the ability to deliver technologically advanced services, which includes broadband, throughout West Virginia. We need a strong partner as we work towards connecting all citizens of the state to the digital economy. Simultaneously, it is 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 at the same time they plan 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 that our citizens have paid for over many decades, and upon which they rely for basic living and economic

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activities. To show what disaster could happen, 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 conclusion, the Verizon-Frontier transaction must be for the public good, and all of the concerns raised must be addressed in a manner that protects the interest of our state and its citizens. I believe that it is not worth the risk to approve this transaction because of the dangers that outweigh any purported public interest benefits and urge the Commission to not approve the sale.

If I may be of any assistance with this matter, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Very Truly Yours,



William R. Wooton

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