



09-0871-T-PC ✓

Michael A. Albert, Chairman
WV Public Service Commission
201 Brooks Street
Charleston, WV 25301

January 6, 2010

1 Protest Original (s)

Dear Chairman Albert:

I am writing on behalf of the West Virginia Nurses Association to convey our organization's opposition to the proposed sale of Verizon landline telephone operations to Connecticut based Frontier Communications. The effects of such a sale would not only be disastrous for West Virginia communications in general but also particularly catastrophic for efforts to provide healthcare to our state's rural areas.

Frontier's acquisition of Verizon's landline operations would jeopardize the stellar quality of service on which so many West Virginians rely. Verizon is currently the nation's top ranked broadband service provider. A recent study shows that Frontier places near the bottom of every category in a consumer satisfaction survey. The sale of established communications operations to smaller upstart companies does not generally bode well for the public. Just last October, FairPoint Communications, which purchased Verizon's operations to rural customers in 18 states, filed for bankruptcy after being unable to overcome the massive debt it acquired in its purchase of Verizon's rural operations. Should the sale of Verizon's West Virginia operations proceed, Frontier will incur debt in excess of \$3.3 billion.

What is most troublesome about the proposed sale is that it could jeopardize rural West Virginians access to emergency medical care. In many areas of our state the exclusive mode of outside communications lie with Verizon's landline services. Should a medical emergency occur, a person living in such a region would be unable to access emergency medical care providers were it not for a landline telephone. Thus the Public Service Commission should scrutinize whether small, untested, Connecticut based Frontier can adequately repair and restore service to West Virginia residents in the event of an outage.

I thank you very much for taking the time to read my letter. I hope you understand the grave effects a sale of Verizon to Frontier Communications would have on our state. I implore you to represent the interests of West Virginians and deny the proposed sale.

Sincerely,

Beth Baldwin

Beth Baldwin
President, West Virginia Nurses Association

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WVA PUBLIC SERVICE

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