November 16, 2015

Mr. David J. Collins
Executive Secretary
Public Service Commission of Maryland
6 St. Paul St., 16th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202-6806

Re: Case No. 9133
In the Matter of Appropriate forms of Regulating Telephone Companies

Case No. 9114
Investigation into Verizon Maryland Service Performance and Service Quality Standards

Dear Mr. Collins:

On behalf of the Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO (CWA), a party to the above-detailed cases, I am renewing CWA’s request that the Commission investigate the current status of the Verizon Maryland’s copper network in Maryland and Verizon Maryland’s compliance with this Commission’s Orders in these proceedings.

In this regard, the Commission should note that in the course of representing our members and as part of its on-going obligation to its members, CWA conducted an investigation of the conditions at Verizon Maryland under which its members work. The investigation focused on the condition of outside plant (readily observable from public streets and sidewalks) in the areas of Maryland where Verizon Maryland has not deployed its fiber-to-the-home facilities known as FiOS. CWA expected its investigation to show deferred maintenance or other indications that Verizon Maryland should be increasing its budget (and frontline workforce) for non-FiOS repair and maintenance. What CWA found, however, as detailed below, were numerous instances throughout the State of physical plant in an appalling state of disrepair that pose a severe threat to service quality to Verizon Maryland’s customers. In addition CWA is concerned that the conditions may now or in the future represent a safety hazard to utility

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1 As this Commission is aware, in September of this year, CWA requested that the Commission investigate the status and Verizon Maryland’ copper network following Verizon’s filing with the FCC that since 2008 has spent $200 million on its copper network in an area that covers the vast majority of the population in eight states – New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, plus Washington, D.C., and parts of California, Texas, and Florida.
employees and the public².

CWA’s investigation demonstrates that Verizon policies and practices neglect copper facilities and customers on the copper networks. CWA has documented some of the most blatant effects of these policies and practices, including Verizon’s woefully inadequate investment in capital and human resources necessary for proper and safe maintenance and repair of its copper facilities, through photographs of Verizon Maryland’s facilities in plain sight from public areas throughout Verizon Maryland’s non-FiOS service area. A sampling of the photographs CWA has collected are attached.

We focus below on four areas in which Verizon Maryland is failing to maintain service quality due to: 1) damaged, unsecured, and broken poles; 2) damaged and exposed cable and splice terminals; 3) by-passing damaged cable; and 4) damage caused by animals. The attached exhibit contains examples of Verizon’s neglect of its physical plant that are characteristic of conditions throughout the state in non-FiOS. Each of the examples could have a direct, negative impact on the service quality provided to Verizon Maryland’s customers in this State.

The Commission should be aware that CWA's members are subject to a Verizon "Code of Conduct" that may be read to limit an employee's ability to disclose certain information about Verizon Maryland with those outside the company. Violations of the "Code of Conduct" can subject an employee to disciplinary action, including the loss of employment. Without further protections and in order to avoid Verizon retaliating against employees for alleged violations of the "Code of Conduct", CWA refrains from providing in this Petition many of the details it would like to share with the Commission concerning Verizon’s neglect of its non-FiOS plant.

As this Commission is well aware, Maryland PUC Art. § 4-301 sets out a standard that permits the Commission to adopt — and Verizon to operate under — an alternative form of regulation for telecommunications utilities such as Verizon Maryland only if the Commission finds that the AFOR protects consumers by — at a minimum — producing affordable and reasonably priced basic service and by ensuring the quality, availability and reliability of telecommunications services throughout the State of Maryland. In addition, the Commission must find that the AFOR encourages the development of competition and is in the public interest.

In Order 83137 issued February 2, 2012 in these matters, the Commission hoped and expected that Verizon Maryland would undertake a renewed commitment to service quality. This Commission worked to ensure that commitment through requirements that Verizon Maryland maintain service quality and operational plans. The reality at this point in time, as demonstrated by these pictures, is that the commitment has waned, the plans have lapsed and the people of Maryland are not receiving the quality of service this Commission and the law expects and requires.

Therefore, CWA once again requests that the Commission conduct a thorough investigation

² COMAR 20.45.08. provides that each utility shall exercise reasonable care to minimize the hazards to which its employees, its customers and the general public may be subjected. It further requires that each utility give reasonable assistance to the Commission in the investigation of the cause of accidents and in the determination of suitable means of preventing accidents.
of Verizon Maryland’s policies and practices regarding its copper network. The Commission should utilize the above-detailed matters to review the state of Verizon Maryland’s copper network in this state. The investigation should include a financial analysis of copper network revenue and expenditures over the past ten years; the current state of the copper infrastructure; staffing levels dedicated to preventive maintenance, repair, installation, and customer service over the past ten years; policies and procedures that impact the quality of service that customers receive; and other items relevant to such an inquiry.

I certify that this correspondence has been forward by US Mail to the entities included on the Commissions service list for these proceedings.

Sincerely,

Vincent Trivelli
Communications Workers of America, AFL CIO
November 16, 2015

Case No. 9133
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Case No. 9114
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Attachment
Damaged, unsecured, and broken poles

1. The picture below from rear of 2405 West Cold Spring Lane, Baltimore City, MD shows a “double-wood.” An old utility pole has been cut with Verizon’s terminal still attached to it. The old pole does not appear secured to the new pole. It is left dangling causing a hazard to the public. It is a worker and public safety concern.

![Damaged pole](image1)

2. The picture below from 1521 Hunter Mill Road, Parkton in Baltimore County, MD shows a utility pole with no tension in the guy wires. Without the tension in the guy wires, there is a higher risk of the pole falling over. This is a public safety concern.

![Broken pole](image2)
3. The picture below from Frt.1214 Wiseburg Road, Parkton in Baltimore County, MD shows a “triple-wood,” where the utility company has replaced a pole but Verizon has not yet transferred over its six cables.

![Image of triple-wood pole]

4. The picture below from rear of 2455 West Cold Spring Lane in Baltimore City, MD shows a “double-wood.” The newer pole was installed in February 2012. The base of the old pole is wrapped in fiberglass to serve as a “pole cast,” and there is a rod driven into it to hold it up.

![Image of double-wood pole]
Damaged and Exposed Cable and Splice Terminals

5. The picture below from Manor, Baltimore County, MD shows a deteriorated cable covered by deteriorated black plastic wrap. Wires are exposed to the elements and an animal has nested inside the wrap. Weather and wildlife affect service. On the right side of the picture, “drop wires” are bypassing the defective cable. Drop wires are not meant for outdoor use, deteriorate more quickly than cable, and their use will affect service.

6. The picture below from Frt. 1525 Walker Avenue, Parkton in Baltimore County, MD shows the remnants of a deteriorated black plastic wrap and exposed wires. There is no hard case to protect the exposed wires and the temporary plastic wrap did not last. Exposed wires are susceptible to damage from weather and animals. Damaged wires cause service outages. The discolored wires indicate long exposure to weather.
7. The picture below from rear 3506 Northway Drive, Baltimore, in Baltimore County, MD shows a deteriorated plastic covering. The exposed wires underneath the plastic are discolored indicating the condition of this splice has existed for some time like this. These wires are susceptible to damage from weather and animals and allows for animal infestation. Damaged wires affect service.

8. The picture below from Pole 22 on Thompson Creek Road, Stevensville in Queen Anne’s County, MD shows a terminal box pulled off the pole, wrapped shut and tied to the pole with wire. The cable feeding the terminal is not long enough to fasten the serving terminal to the pole vertically. Working on the terminal presents a safety challenge for the technician because it would require untying the wire, which would then cause the terminal’s sharp-edged front lid to fall on the technician. This is both a worker safety and service affecting concern because the wire will deteriorate and the terminal will swing loose on the pole or open and expose the wires.
9. The picture below from Pole 4 on North Lake Drive, Stevensville in Queen Anne’s County, MD shows deteriorated plastic wrapping that has uncovered the side of the splice closure it was intended to protect. The cable has been pulled out of the terminal exposing the wires to the elements, which causes deteriorating wires and service outages.

10. The picture below shows Pedestal 12 on Romancoke Road, Stevensville in Queen Anne’s County, MD with a lid cover that will not close. Without a cover, the pedestal’s internal wiring is exposed to animals and weather, both of which can affect service. A technician has attempted to protect the internal wiring that provides customers’ service by placing a “waffle case” over the wiring. Waffle cases are used in a manhole or on aerial cables, not pedestals. The overgrowth on the lid and pedestal suggests the condition of this pedestal has existed and gone without needed repair for some time. This is a public safety hazard.
11. The picture below from 13108 Manor Road, Manor in Baltimore County, MD shows a missing splicer terminal case. The wires are exposed to animals and the elements, causing service outages. Discolored wires indicated long exposure to weather.

![Image of Manor Road splice issue](image1.jpg)

12. The picture below from Pole 16 Dominion Road, Chester in Queen Anne’s County, MD (north of Ocean City) shows multiple service affecting problems. First there is a splice terminal that should be secured to the strand. The end collar or stub is pulled out of the splice case. It is upside-down and the temporary, black plastic wrapping (yellow arrow) on the right side allows it collect water. Water deteriorates the wires and affects service.

![Image of Dominion Road splice issue](image2.jpg)
13. The picture below from Pole 31 on Cox Neck Road, Chester, in Queen Anne’s County, MD (north of Ocean City) is a closure from the 1980’s before the Company replaced these soft closures with hard plastic cases. It shows wires exposed to the elements. Exposed wires will short out customer phone lines. Water, insects, and animals get into the closure, damaging wires and affecting service.

14. The picture below from Pole 2, North Lake Drive, Stevensville in Queen Anne’s County, MD shows plastic wrapped around the cable between two splice terminals which each house 100-200 customers lines. Water runs into the plastic and forms the “belly” that pulls on the wrapping. The covering collects water, deteriorating the wires and affecting service.
15. The picture below from 1700 Ingram Road, Baltimore in Baltimore County, MD shows a splice case with deteriorated black plastic covering. Deteriorated covering leaves wires susceptible to damage from weather and animals. Damaged wires cause repeated customer service outages.

![ splice case with deteriorated black plastic covering ]

16. The picture below of Pole 10 on Elm Street, Stevensville in Queen Anne’s County, MD shows a terminal taped shut and taped to a pole. The terminal should be secured to the pole. Likely this pole had been replaced and contractors taped the box to the pole instead of properly reattaching it and the wires below the box. Working on the terminal would require cutting the tape, which would cause the sharp-edged case front to fall outward on the technician. This is both a worker safety concern and service quality affecting because the tape will eventually deteriorate and allow the terminal to swing loose on the pole or swing open.

![ terminal taped shut and taped to a pole ]
17. The picture below from Ped 2, Beach Drive, Stevensville in Queen Anne’s County, MD shows a splice terminal that has been wrapped with a temporary plastic covering. There are exposed wires underneath the covering. The covering collects water, deteriorating the wires and affecting service.

18. The picture below from 1105 Elbank Avenue, Baltimore City, MD shows a terminal that is not attached to the pole. It appears to be wrapped and tied to the pole with wires and cable ties. The terminal should be vertical and secured to the pole. Working on the terminal would require untying the wire and cutting the cable ties which would cause the terminal to flip and potentially hit the technician. This is a worker safety concern because the wire will deteriorate and the terminal will swing or open.
19. The picture below from 732 Glenwood Avenue, Baltimore City, MD shows a terminal with deteriorated black plastic covering. Deteriorated covering leaves wires susceptible to damage from weather and animals. It can also create an unsafe environment by allowing bees to nest in the wires. Damaged wires that are exposed to the elements are more likely to affect service.

20. The picture below from Baltimore City, MD shows a white plastic wrap over a defective cable. The clear plastic is the shipping material the SLIC enclosure comes in. This is an example of a technician not having the proper material available to them. There are exposed wires underneath the covering. The covering collects water, which deteriorates the wires and affects service.
By-passing Damaged Cable

21. The picture below from 13001 Long Green Pike, Manor in Baltimore County, MD shows a black plastic wrap covering a defective cable and multiple wires bypassing a defective 200-pair cable. The cable is bypassed using drop wires, which are not meant for outdoor use. They will deteriorate faster than the cable. As they deteriorate, there will be service issues.

22. The picture below from Pole 53 Wiseburg Road, Parkton in Baltimore County, MD shows multiple wires bypassing a defective cable. The cable is bypassed using drop wires, which are not meant for outdoor use. They will deteriorate faster than the cable. As they deteriorate, there will be service issues.