

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the North American
Number Administrator Notice of Area
Code Exhaust with a Request to Initiate
Area Code Relief Planning for the 206
Numbering Plan Area

DOCKET UT-230108

ORDER 01

EXTENDING 564 AREA CODE
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO 206
AREA CODE

BACKGROUND

- 1 The North American Numbering Plan Administration (NANPA) administers and assigns to telecommunications companies the available blocks of telephone numbers known as Central Office Codes in each Numbering Plan Area (NPA or area code). These companies, in turn, assign telephone numbers from within these codes to their customers.
- 2 On May 10, 2000, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) entered Order Implementing Area Code Relief Plan in Docket UT-991535 (May 2000 Order) in which the Commission initially approved a plan to add a new NPA to remedy the anticipated exhaust of telephone numbers in the 360 area code. The Commission determined that a single area code would overlay all of western Washington, so that some customers in a geographic area would have telephone numbers with 360, 206, 253, or 425 area codes, while other customers in the same area would have numbers with the new NPA. As a result of successful number conservation efforts, however, the Commission subsequently suspended implementation of the new NPA.¹
- 3 On March 25, 2016, NANPA notified the Commission that the available codes in the 360 NPA would be exhausted in the first quarter of 2018. On May 20, 2016, the Commission entered Order 01 in Docket UT-143787 authorizing the NANPA Administrator to assign central office codes with telephone numbers in the 564 area code in the existing 360 numbering plan area beginning in the third quarter of 2017. The order further provided that the Administrator could assign those codes in the other existing numbering plan areas in western Washington only when the Administrator forecasts, and the Commission

¹ Order Suspending Area Code Relief Plan, Docket UT-991535 (Sept. 5, 2001).

confirms, that those number plan areas are nearing exhaust. To facilitate the deployment of the new area code, the Commission required telecommunications service providers with telephone number resources in the 206, 253, 360, and 425 numbering plan areas to implement mandatory 10-digit dialing for all calls throughout those areas by September 30, 2017.

- 4 NANPA conducts a biannual analysis, which the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) incorporates into its national area code exhaust projection report. On April 24, 2023, the NANPA completed the first quarter 2023 national area code exhaust projection, and the FCC report confirms the western Washington 206 NPA is projected to exhaust in the fourth quarter of 2025.
- 5 On February 16, 2023, NANPA filed a petition on behalf of the telecommunications industry in Washington requesting implementation of an overlay of the 206 NPA with the 564 NPA as provided in Order 01 in Docket UT-143787 with revised implementation dates (Petition). The industry providers propose a nine-month implementation schedule, which is consistent with current industry practices for implementing an overlay when mandatory 10-digit dialing is already in place. The proposed schedule does not specify dates but includes timeframes to identify the specific technical and consumer phases of implementation. Once the Commission has approved the implementation timeline schedule, the industry will select specific dates at a NANPA facilitated meeting with Commission regulatory staff (Staff) and industry members to ensure the dates do not interfere with holidays, high traffic calling days, network freeze periods, or other NPA relief implementation activities occurring across the country. Industry members and Staff will collaborate on implementation processes, technical requirements, consumer, and media notifications.
- 6 The Commission considered the Petition at the Commission's regularly scheduled open meeting on June 15, 2023. Staff and industry providers support the phased in implementation of the 564 NPA as an overlay on the 206 NPA. Staff recommended that the Commission enter an order to (1) overlay the 206 NPA with the 564 NPA for the purpose of addressing number exhaust, and (2) direct the industry to develop and execute a nine-month implementation schedule so that the 564 NPA overlay will be completed six months prior to the projected exhaust of the 206 NPA in accordance with NPA Relief Guidelines.

DISCUSSION

7 The Commission agrees with and adopts Staff's recommendations. We appreciate Staff and industry efforts to conserve telephone number resources, allowing a substantial delay in implementation of the 564 overlay NPA. Based on the NANPA's analysis and FCC report, however, we can no longer delay implementing relief for the exhaustion of the 206 area code.

8 The Commission determined in its prior orders in dockets UT-991535 and UT-143787 that the 564 area code would cover all of western Washington, and we adhere to that determination for the reasons stated in those orders. Telecommunications subscribers in this half of the state already must dial 10 digits when placing all calls, thus substantially reducing any burden on consumers as a result of extending the 564 NPA into the 206 area code.

9 We also concur with Staff's proposal to require the industry to develop and execute a nine-month implementation schedule so that the 564 NPA overlay will be completed six months prior to the projected exhaust of the 206 NPA in accordance with NANPA's NPA Relief Guidelines.

10 Finally, the extension of the implementation of the 564 NPA must include robust industry outreach to consumers to inform them of the changes that will result. We direct Staff and the industry to work together in the technical deployment, customer education, and community involvement needed to ensure successful implementation of the 564 NPA.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 11 (1) The Commission has jurisdiction over matters involving the introduction of new area codes within Washington.
- 12 (2) The Commission should adhere to its previous conclusion to have the 564 NPA overlay all of western Washington, with telephone numbers in that NPA available for assignment in the affected area codes as they near exhaust.
- 13 (3) NANPA estimates that telephone numbers in the 206 NPA will exhaust sometime in the fourth quarter of 2025. Accordingly, numbers in the 564 NPA overlay should be available for assignment during the second quarter of 2025.

- 14 (4) Telecommunications service providers should be required to develop and execute a nine-month implementation schedule so that the 564 numbering plan area overlay will be completed six months prior to the projected exhaust of the 206 NPA in accordance with NANPA's NPA Relief Guidelines.
- 15 (5) Staff and the telecommunications industry should be required to work together in the technical deployment, customer education, and community involvement needed to ensure successful implementation of the 564 NPA in the 206 area code.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 16 (1) The Commission adheres to its previous determination that the new 564 numbering plan area must overlay all of western Washington.
- 17 (2) The North American Numbering Plan Administrator may assign central office codes with telephone numbers in the 564 area code in the existing 206 numbering plan area beginning in the second quarter of 2025.
- 18 (3) Telecommunications service providers with number resources in the 206 numbering plan area must develop and execute a nine-month implementation schedule so that the 564 numbering plan area overlay will be completed six months prior to the projected exhaust of the 206 numbering plan area in accordance with the North American Numbering Plan Administrator's Numbering Plan Area Relief Guidelines.
- 19 (4) Telecommunications service providers with number resources in the 206 numbering plan area must work with Staff on the technical deployment, customer education, and community involvement needed to ensure successful extended implementation of the 564 numbering plan area.
- 20 (5) The Commission retains jurisdiction over these matters to enforce the terms of this Order.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective June 15, 2023.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAVID W. DANNER, Chair

ANN E. RENDAHL, Commissioner

MILTON H. DOUMIT, Commissioner