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NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FCC PROPOSES TO FINE WCSS \$560,000 FOR "SLAMMING" VIOLATIONS

Washington, D.C. - Today, the Federal Communications Commission proposed a forfeiture of \$560,000 against World Communications Satellite Systems, Inc. ("WCSS") for apparent violations of the Communications Act and the Commission's rules and orders prohibiting slamming. Slamming is the illegal practice of switching consumers' preferred long distance or other telephone service providers without their consent.

After receiving a large number of consumer complaints, the Commission's Enforcement Bureau, along with the Public Utility Commission of Texas, launched an investigation into WCSS's practices. The Commission found that WCSS apparently submitted preferred carrier changes for 10 consumers on 13 occasions without their authorization and verification. The Commission found that in one of those instances, WCSS apparently misled the consumer by asserting that it had a verification tape for the switch when it apparently did not have such a tape. Because of the egregiousness of WCSS's behavior, the Commission proposed a forfeiture of \$80,000 for that violation, as compared with \$40,000 for each of the other 12 unauthorized carrier changes.

WCSS is a reseller of long distance telephone service, located in Champaign, Illinois. The consumers whose service was switched without authorization are all located in Texas.

Action by the Commission on January 13, 2004, by Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture (FCC 04-9), Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps, Martin, and Adelstein.

- FCC -

File No. EB-03-TC-177

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