BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Petition of Sprint Nextel Corporation to extend its Request for a partial Waiver of WAC 480-123-030(1)(g)	)	DOCKET NO. UT-073023
	)	

PETITION OF SPRINT NEXTEL CORPORATION TO EXTEND ITS REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF WAC 480-123-030(1)(g)

Dated: August 21, 2009

SPRINT NEXTEL CORPORATION
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I. INTRODUCTION

Sprint Nextel Corporation ("Sprint Nextel"), on behalf of itself and its subsidiaries and affiliates offering commercial mobile radio services ("CMRS") in the State of Washington, submits to extend the Request for partial exemption and waiver of WAC 480-123-030(1)(g). On October 23, 2007 the Commission approved Sprint Nextel to expand its ETC designation to include its iDEN network and add additional wire centers. As part of that approval the Commission granted a Partial Exemption From WAC 480-123-030(1)(g) and WAC 480-123-070(6) for Sprint Nextel's iDEN network.

> We grant the Company a temporary exemption from WAC 480-123-030(1)(g) regarding the requirement for battery back-up power for a period of two years, subject to the condition that the Company must increase to four hours, alternative power (battery, fixed generation, or fuel cells) at all cell sites that now have fewer than four hours of alternative power. *(Order 01, Page 7)*

Sprint Nextel respectfully requests the Commission grant an extension of the above mentioned partial exemption and waiver of WAC 480-123-030(1)(g) until December 31, 2011.

II. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF WAC 480-123-030(1)(g)

WAC 480-123-030(1)(g) requires an ETC applicant to demonstrate that it has the ability to function in emergency situations. For a wireless carrier, WAC 480-123-030(1)(g) provides that the applicant demonstrate that it maintains at least four hours of back up battery power at each cell site, back up generators at each microwave hub, and at least five hours back up battery power and back up generators at each switch.

Sprint Nextel cell sites equipped with iDEN technology were engineered with a minimum of two (2), rather than four (4), hours of battery standby power. Sprint Nextel engineers its iDEN cell sites with a minimum of two (2) hours of battery back-up to enable its technicians

sufficient time to respond and deploy portable generators or other equipment to maintain service. To accomplish this, Sprint Nextel stages its portable generators and equipment at key locations throughout its service area. The Company also utilizes an alarm system that works in stages to alert its on-call technicians. First, the alarm signals the instant a cell site switches to battery back-up power. Following the initial alarm, the system will alert Sprint Nextel technicians when the battery back-up reaches 50% capacity. This system allows Sprint Nextel technicians to evaluate and prioritize their deployment of back-up equipment during emergency situations. Sprint Nextel's established response procedures have proven sufficient to maintain cell site operations due to a loss of commercial power. Sprint Nextel's two hour battery back-up standard, coupled with its timely response and deployment of portable generators or other equipment, adequately ensure that the Company's iDEN-equipped cell sites remain functional during emergency situations.

Similarly, Sprint Nextel's iDEN MSC locations were equipped with three, rather than five, hours of battery back up. In addition to battery back up, the Company's MSC locations are also equipped with on-site generators and a seventy-two hour fuel supply. These combined resources enable the Sprint Nextel to operate its MSC locations up to seventy-five hours, with existing supplies, following a loss of commercial power. Under foreseeable circumstances, this seventy-five hour period will provide Sprint Nextel technicians sufficient time to respond and deploy additional equipment or fuel to maintain service.

Accordingly, Sprint Nextel respectfully requests an extension of the limited waiver of WAC 480-123-030(1)(g) previously granted in October, 2007, to the extent the Rule would require four hours of battery back up at the Company's iDEN-equipped cell sites and five hours of battery back up at its iDEN MSC locations. Sprint Nextel's engineering standards and

response procedures are reasonable and should be deemed sufficient to satisfy the intent of WAC 480-123-030(1)(g).

A. DISCUSSION

At the time the commission granted Sprint Nextel the partial exemption from WAC 480-123-030(1)(g) in October of 2007, Sprint Nextel had 156 cell sites that did not meet the 4 hour alternative power requirement. Over the past two years, Sprint Nextel has significantly reduced the total number of non-compliant sites from 156 to 75. Notably, 32 of Sprint Nextel's 33 Class One sites and all 12 of Sprint Nextel's Class Two sites that were previously non-compliant, now satisfy the minimum 4 hours of backup power. (Two of the Class Two sites that are counted above among the now compliant sites, currently house portable generators that are connected to each site, but could be removed in the event of an emergency requiring that they be temporarily relocated to provide backup power to another impacted site within Sprint Nextel's network). The current compliance status of Sprint Nextel's iDEN cell sites within the designated ETC footprint is as follows: 81 of the 82 Class One sites are compliant; all 38 Class Two sites are compliant; 344 of the 419 Class Three sites are compliant (75 Class Three sites are not yet compliant).

Many of Sprint Nextel's cell sites also provide overlapping coverage for neighboring areas that can be used in the event of power failure at a particular facility. In the event of a major failure of a cell site, neighboring sites could be adjusted to provide coverage to a wider service area. In addition, Sprint Nextel maintains several "Cells On Wheels" ("COWs"), which are portable self-contained cell sites, that can provide a temporary coverage solution.

As discussed above, Sprint Nextel has significantly reduced the number of non-compliant sites over the past two years. Sprint Nextel will continue to work toward bring the remaining Class Three sites into compliance through the addition of battery strings or generators during this

extended two year waiver process. However, the cost of bringing Class Three sites into compliance remains extremely costly. In the extremely unlikely event that all of Sprint Nextel's 419 Class Three sites were to lose commercial power, it is anticipated that Sprint Nextel's overall network would only see a 15% loss of coverage at the "on-street" threshold. Of the 75 Class Three sites that are non-compliant, a minimum of 9 require generator placement and the other 66 cell sites may be able to receive additional battery strands and rectifiers. The conservative estimated cost to perform this work is approximately $1.5 million dollars. This investment competes with investment that could be better spent on making the current network operate as efficiently as possible, adding capacity or expanding the footprint.

III. CONCLUSION

Sprint Nextel has made a good faith effort to reduce the number of cell sites that are not compliant with WAC 480-123-030(1)(g). Sprint Nextel seeks an additional waiver until December 31, 2011 to continue to work towards bringing the remaining Class Three sites into compliance.

Respectfully submitted,

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