

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Petition of )  
CenturyTel for Suspension of ) DOCKET NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
Wireline to Wireless Local Number )  
Portability Requirements )

PETITION OF CENTURYTEL FOR SUSPENSION OF  
LOCAL NUMBER PORTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Petitioner, CenturyTel of Washington, Inc., d/b/a CenturyTel, (“CenturyTel” or “Petitioner”) hereby requests, pursuant to Section 251 (f) (2) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, that the Commission suspend or modify certain aspects of the local number portability requirements set forth by the Federal Communications Commission in *Memorandum Opinion and Order* in CC Docket No. 85-116 released November 10, 2003. In support of this petition, CenturyTel states as follows:

2. CenturyTel is an incumbent local exchange carrier with its business address at:

CenturyTel  
8102 Skansie Avenue  
Gig Harbor, Washington 98335

CenturyTel’s authorized representative in this matter is:

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3. CenturyTel has fewer than two percent of the nation's subscriber lines and, therefore, under Section 251 (f) (2) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (the "Act") is eligible to seek a suspension or modification of local number portability requirements established pursuant to Section 251 (b) (2) of the Act. Section 251 (b) (2) requires that all local exchange carriers provide number portability, to the extent technically feasible, in accordance with requirements prescribed by the FCC. "Number Portability" is defined at Section 153 (30) of the Act as "...the ability of users of telecommunications services to retain, at the same location, existing telecommunications numbers ...when switching from telecommunications carrier to another." (emphasis added)

4. On November 10, 2003, the FCC issued its *Memorandum Opinion and Order* in CC Docket No. 95-116 regarding wireline-to-wireless number portability. The *Order* concludes that, as of November 24, 2003, local exchange carriers (LECs) providing service within the Nation's 100 largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) must port numbers to wireless carriers where the requesting wireless carrier's "coverage area" overlaps the geographic location of the rate center in which the customer's wireline number is provisioned. CenturyTel seeks suspension and waiver of this decision because it is technically infeasible for it to comply with the *Order* by November 24, 2003.

5. Centurytel has 15 wire centers that provide service within MSAs in Washington that are identified as being in the top 100.<sup>1</sup> None of these wire centers is fully capable of providing number portability today. There are several steps that must take place before local number portability would become fully functional in these wire centers. These steps include:

a) Activating, licensing, and testing LNP software in each of the switches serving these wire centers. The software must be activated by the switch vendor.

All other rural ILECs are also scrambling to meet deadlines established in the *Order*. Hundreds of these companies rely on the same switch vendor as does CenturyTel. This circumstance will put great demands on the limited resources of the switch vendor. Even if the vendor would have begun work on the day the *Order* was issued, and even if it worked exclusively on switches of the CenturyTel affiliated companies, it would have been impossible to accomplish all of the software activations by the November 24, 2003 deadline.

b) Evaluation and possible reinforcement of data links. A critical element of LNP conversion is that the switch is able to communicate with a centralized database to do number translation inquiries for each and every originating call. CenturyTel will rely on a third party database provider for LNP database dips. Although the CenturyTel switches have existing SS7 links to that database provider for other functions, those links must be re-evaluated and possibly re-

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<sup>1</sup> The 15 CenturyTel wire centers referenced are Ames Lake, Arletta, Ashford, Carnation, Falls City, Gig Harbor, Lakebay/Fox Island, North Bend, North Vashon, Orting, Packwood, Snoqualmie Pass, South Prairie, Vashon, and Yacolt.

enforced due to the greatly increased traffic that will be associated with LNP database dips.

c) Evaluation and possible creation or re-enforcement of interoffice transport facilities necessary to deliver traffic to wireless carriers' points of presence. The *Order* (at paragraph 39) acknowledges that wireline to wireless number porting in the manner required by the *Order* will result in a changing of the routing of calls, possibly requiring routing to a point of connection outside of the service areas of the ILEC. Migration of this traffic to locations outside of CenturyTel's service area requires that evaluations be made to determine if new or re-enforced interoffice facilities will be required for this purpose.

d) Re-enforcement of service order process. The CenturyTel affiliated companies do currently have a service ordering process dedicated to LNP requests. However, that process is currently staffed up to accommodate only the minimal wireline to wireline LNP activity that has occurred to date in limited and selected service territories. Additional training and staffing will have to take place before the process is capable of handling the greatly increased activity associated with wireline to wireless LNP.

6. It is clearly technically infeasible to accomplish the steps described above by the November 24, 2003 deadline. CenturyTel requests that this Commission grant a Section 251 (f) (2) suspension of the November 24, 2003 deadline based upon this technical infeasibility.

7. The circumstances that give rise to the need for this suspension are not the fault of CenturyTel. CenturyTel did not anticipate that the FCC would issue an order that

ignores and, in fact, contradicts the Act's directive that LNP apply only to retention of numbers "at the same location." The *Order* embodies the FCC's sudden and abrupt reversal of its interpretation of the "at the same location" language. It is not only in error, but was issued without warning or appropriate notice or legal process. The nature of the FCC's sudden and unsupported "reversal" is fully described in CenturyTel's Joint Petition For Stay Pending Judicial Review filed with the FCC. A copy of that petition is attached hereto for this Commission's reference.

8. The FCC then compounded its error by giving a mere 14 days for ILECs to comply with its newfound interpretation of LNP requirements. Whatever else one thinks of the FCC's methods and conclusions, this totally unrealistic deadline creates a technical infeasibility. This is precisely the type of technical infeasibility that the Act had in mind when it gave the state commissions power to grant a Section 251 (f) (2) suspension.

9. CenturyTel submits that granting the suspension will not harm the public interest as it will merely move the deadline for these 15 wire centers closer to the deadline established for the other CenturyTel wire centers (established at May 24, 2004 in the *Order*). It can hardly be argued that it is critical to the public interest that customers in Ashford get access to LNP earlier than customers in Connell.

Now, therefore, CenturyTel requests that this Commission grant it a Section 251 (f) (2) suspension of the requirements of the *Order* for a period of 90 days.

Respectfully submitted this 20th day of November 2003.

CENTURYTEL OF WASHINGTON, INC.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

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