

January 10, 2002

VIA ELECTRONIC AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Ms. Carole J. Washburn
Executive Secretary
WASHINGTON UTILITIES & TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

RE: RULEMAKING DOCKET NO. UT-990146

Dear Ms. Washburn:

Pursuant to the Notice of Opportunity to File Written Comments and to Propose Alternative Rule Language, dated January 8, 2002, the Washington Telecommunications Ratepayers Association for Cost-based and Equitable Rates ("TRACER") provides the following comments on the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Staff's ("Staff") discussion draft of an alternative rule to WAC 480-120-340.

I. INTRODUCTION

TRACER appreciates Staff's efforts to propose a rule revision that responds to the concerns raised by the Military Department about the shortcomings of the existing rules dealing with the E911 obligations of local exchange companies ("LECs"). TRACER generally agrees with the recommended rule change; however, it believes that three changes to subsection (1)(b) are required in order for the proposed rule to respond to the Military Department's stated concern, be consistent with Washington law, and enable LECs to comply with its terms.

II. DISCUSSION

The proposed rule would require LECs to provide multi-line customers with the ability to dial 911 and have the "call and the caller's station phone number transmitted to the E911 selective router serving the location of the point of presence for that line." As a general matter, where an end-use customer uses a private switch such as a PBX, what gets forwarded to the E911 selective router when a 911 call is made is the automatic number identification associated with the trunk that connects the PBX to the public switched telephone network ("PSTN"). The automatic location information ("ALI") generated by the E911 system is the location information associated with the location of the PBX, not the telephone station from which the 911 call was made. Because the 911 caller may be located some distance from the PBX--where the telephone set is connected to the PBX through an off-premise extension ("OPX") or via a tie-line through a second PBX--the ALI may not be suitable for efficiently locating the 911 caller. In order for a

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local exchange company to be able to provide (“ALI”) for individual telephone stations located behind a PBX, the PBX or associated auxiliary equipment must generate and forward a number which will identify the caller’s telephone station to the E911 network. And, the number forwarded must be associated in the E911 database with the actual location of the telephone station. In other words, the LEC would not be able to comply with the proposed rule unless its multi-line customers generate and forward identifying numbers associated with the stations located behind their private switches.

Under Washington law only common and public schools (RCW 28A.335.320), private shared telecommunications service providers serving multiple residential units (RCW 80.36.555), and commercial shared services providers serving multiple, unaffiliated business users from a single system (RCW 80.36.560) are required to configure their private switching systems and connect them to the PSTN in a way that will enable calls to 911 to result in ALI for each telephone station in a format that is compatible with the E911 system. For other businesses and entities, the provision of ALI capability for individual stations behind their private switches is optional. Thus, the proposed rule needs to be revised to condition a LEC’s obligation to provide ALI for stations behind customer-owned PBXs on the availability of station identification numbers from the customer.

TRACER also recommends that the reference to a caller’s station “phone number” be changed to station “identification number” to include circumstances where a station does not have an individual direct-dial “phone number” but is still identified by a number that may not result in a call-back to the calling station but will allow the station to be sufficiently located so that emergency response teams can find it.

Finally, TRACER recommends that the reference to the router serving the location of the “point of presence for that line” be changed to the location “of the caller’s station.” This change would avoid any confusion over what the “point of presence” of a line is when a line has two termini. It would also avoid any confusion over whether the “line” being referred to is the station line or the trunk line connecting to the PSTN. Because a caller may be located remotely from the PBX, it is important that the location identified is that of the caller, not the switch.

In sum, TRACER recommends that subsection (1)(b) of the proposed rule be revised to state: **“For multi-line customers, the ability for customers to dial 911 with the call and caller’s station identification number transmitted to the E911 selective router serving the location of the caller’s station, where the PBX or auxiliary equipment generates and forwards appropriate number identification information for that station.”**

TRACER understands that the Military Department’s concern is twofold: First, that many businesses that take local service from competitive local exchange companies (“CLECs”) want to provide ALI capability for telephones located behind their private switches but are not able to, because the CLECs do not offer an appropriate ALI capability; Second, that in some cases, there is no mechanism for the entry of the station identification information into the E911 database. With the changes proposed above, TRACER believes that these concerns are addressed by the proposed rule and would support its adoption.

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III. CONCLUSION

TRACER appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule. Please contact me if you have any questions about these comments or need additional information.

Very truly yours,

ATER WYNNE LLP

Arthur A. Butler

Addressee
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