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Carole Washburn, Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive S. W.
P.O. Box 47250
Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

Dear Ms. Washburn:

While I appreciate the effort of Public Counsel to review my proposal, and I agree that more review is a good thing, it is clear that they missed my point.

Mr. Fitch writes “Currently “1+” dialing is a reliable “toll indicator” ...If it evolves to a point where it is no longer a toll-indicator, customers may have lost a reliable tool which gives them a piece of information about the system, while introducing additional confusion about the type of call and its cost.” Excuse me? We are already trained to dial “1” to give our permission to charge a toll for a toll call. If that toll happens to be \$0.00, *who cares?* He goes on to suggest that it might be useful to “[advise] the customer that they have misdialed what is actually a local call, perhaps by use of a recorded message.” Pardon me? Why would I care that this call that I was willing to place when I thought it would cost me money is actually free? Why do I need to be interrupted with such an announcement?

Besides, when I call people I know, I know how to dial the call. My problem comes when I return a call or when I look up a number in the phone book. These are often new numbers for me and I do not care to learn to dial the number properly, I just want to place my order, or ask my question or return the call.

Plus, this recording implies the expectation that the call was made by an english-speaking adult. My young children would undoubtedly hang up at the sound of an unfamiliar voice and think that they reached the wrong number.

And what about computers, and the automatic redialing systems that do not work under the current structure?

Mr. Fitch goes on to list these other problems which would need to be addressed. While I agree that some degree of resolution may be necessary, I cannot agree that they are important in the context of implementing this proposal. They are:

Scope of Problem: Nationwide. (In other words, really big and worth fixing.)

Other alternatives: I can hardly wait to hear some that work as well and can be implemented with so little disruption to the dialing patterns which we have all been trained to follow.

Cost of Conversion: Important but hardly worth putting off a solution for, especially given that this is a national problem. There will be a cost involved. Given the scope of the problem, this cost can be spread over many phone companies and I would expect it to ultimately be barely significant. Especially in view of the fact that they are currently offering substandard service now. If we had real competition in *local* calling areas, I would certainly switch to the company that offered this service.

Coordination with upcoming area code overlays, Scheduling of implementation, need for Public education: Well of course these need to be addressed. But they cannot be addressed until a solution is selected. *They result from the selection of the solution.*

Impact on 911: Since when does anyone dial "1-911"? Putting local calls through when preceded with a 1 has no impact on 911 service.

Impact on toll-blocking: Remember, this is *optional*, not required. Any number that currently blocks numbers preceded by "1" could still do that. The people who currently use such devices would not see any difference in their use of the equipment. I think this comes from the misunderstanding that this proposal makes a "1" required for all calls. I do not endorse that idea.

Impact on phone company billing systems: How does this impact that? They do not charge for local calls now (in my service at least) and they should not charge for local calls in the future. They already have their computer programmed to identify a local call. Rather than sending back an annoying message that tells me to redial the number, they can just send themselves a

message that this is a local call and route it on through. Remember this solution just captures local calls and routes them. There is no effect on long-distance dialing.

I have heard about some interest in doing away with the “1” for all calls. This has nothing to do with my proposal. There are many issues that relate to this scenario. And I have some suggestions as to how this could be implemented also. But it has nothing to do with my request to put local calls through!

Now, I am not a proponent of “hasty adoption” of this proposal. But, I am heartened by the fact that I have not yet heard of a real problem under this proposal or even a *logical* scenario in which a problem would occur. I am dismayed that there is so much resistance to what seems to me to be a very simple solution to a very annoying, and wide-spread problem.

Sincerely,

Patricia Atkinson

Cc via email:

Glenn Blackmon
Laura Ruderman
Public Counsel