

D.P.U. 93-45

Investigation by the Department of Public Utilities into New England Telephone and Telegraph Company's proposal to implement the Interchangeable Numbering Plan Area plan in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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VOTE TO OPEN INVESTIGATION

On February 4, 1993, in the 413 LATA, New England Telephone and Telegraph Company ("NET" or "Company") began implementation of its dialing changes for the Interchangeable Numbering Plan Area ("INPA") plan for Massachusetts. The Company previously notified the Department of Public Utilities ("Department") that due to a dwindling supply of available area codes, NET, along with all other local exchange carriers throughout the country, is changing the dialing pattern for certain types of telephone calls.

On February 19, 1993, MCI Telecommunications Corporation ("MCI") filed a Motion with the Department requesting that the Department (1) open an investigation into the matter, (2) find that adoption of NET's seven digit dialing method is not in the public interest, (3) order NET to halt any further efforts to implement seven digit dialing, and (4) order NET to implement the eleven digit dialing alternative in order to accommodate changes in the North American Numbering Plan <sup>1</sup> and to educate its customers accordingly. Sprint Communications Company L.P. ("Sprint") also submitted written comments to the Department requesting that the Department open an investigation into the matter.

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<sup>1</sup> The North American Numbering Plan provides area codes and telephone numbers in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean Islands.

On February 23, 1993, after due notice, the Department held a public hearing in Springfield, Massachusetts to hear comments on the proposal and to determine whether a formal investigation into NET's proposal was warranted. At the public hearing, the Attorney General of the Commonwealth ("Attorney General") and RCI Long Distance New England, Inc. d/b/a Long Distance North ("LDN") also requested that a formal investigation be opened by the Department. On March 2, 1993, NET filed its response opposing the requests for a formal investigation.

In view of the requests and comments made by the Attorney General, MCI, Sprint, and Long Distance North, the Department finds that it is appropriate to open an investigation into NET's proposal for implementing the I-NPA plan. This investigation is docketed as D.P.U. 93-45. The Department recognizes that NET must implement dialing changes by January 1, 1995 pursuant to requirements of the North American Numbering Plan Administrator. Therefore, the Department intends to complete this investigation expeditiously.

The Department will not, at this time, order NET to cease implementation of its scheduled dialing changes. However, the Company is placed on notice that it assumes any and all risks associated with continuing to implement those changes while the investigation is ongoing.

Accordingly, the Department

VOTES: To open an investigation into New England Telephone and Telegraph Company's proposal to implement the INPA plan in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and it is hereby

ORDERED: That a schedule for a procedural conference in this matter be set within ten (10) days of this Order.

By Order of the Department,