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May 28, 2013

Catrice C. Williams, Secretary  
Department of Telecommunications and Cable  
1000 Washington Street, Suite 820  
Boston, MA 02118

**Re: Docket No. 13 – 4 -- Investigation by the Department on its Own  
Motion into the Implementation in Massachusetts of the Federal  
Communication Commission's Order Reforming the Lifeline Program**

Dear Secretary Williams:

Enclosed for filing in the above-referenced proceeding are the Reply Comments of Verizon New England Inc.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alex Moore".

Alexander W. Moore

Enclosures

cc: Karlen Reed, Director  
Paul Abbott, General Counsel  
Ben Dobbs, Deputy Director  
Service List (electronic distribution)

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND CABLE

	)	
Investigation by the Department on its Own	)	
Motion into the Implementation in Massachusetts	)	D.T.C. 13-4
of the Federal Communication Commission's	)	
Order Reforming the Lifeline Program	)	
	)	

REPLY COMMENTS OF VERIZON NEW ENGLAND INC.

Verizon New England Inc., d/b/a Verizon Massachusetts (“Verizon MA”) hereby responds to the comments of other parties in this proceeding. In general, the comments submitted by ETCs demonstrate that the Department should proceed cautiously in considering potential regulations governing the Lifeline program in the Commonwealth. ETCs explain that the need to win and retain customers in the competitive market provides ample motivation for ETCs to treat their customers well, without the government regulations discussed in the Exhibit to the Request for Comment and Notice of Public Hearing (“Exhibit”) or the additional costs such state-specific requirements would impose on ETCs. As YourTel America put it, “given competition and virtually no barriers to customer migration, ETCs have strong incentives to treat customers fairly so as to encourage customer retention ....” YourTel Comments at 2. Verizon MA also agrees that the Department should “impose regulations only in such instances where the competitive forces within the market are not themselves effective at preventing a market failure.” Virgin Mobile Comments, at 1.

Commenters also explain that the FCC’s Lifeline reporting and certification requirements would satisfy Department purposes without the need for unique state regulations. *See* Verizon Comments; YourTel Comments at 3; T-Mobile Comments at 12. In addition, commenters point

out a number of potential rules in the Exhibit which, if enacted, would impermissibly regulate the rates of wireless carriers and be preempted under federal law. Finally, the comments also demonstrate that significant differences in the business plans, operations and existing regulatory obligations of carriers that are ETCs require differentiation in any Lifeline regulations. A “one size fits all” approach would ignore these differences and result in unfair and inappropriate treatment.

Verizon MA addresses below the individual rules on which the Department sought comment.

**I. Existing Department Requirements.**

- a. Reporting to the Department on a quarterly basis the number of Lifeline subscriber accounts terminated for non-usage each month.

As T-Mobile points out, the FCC rule on de-enrollment for non-usage does not apply to postpaid carriers, and as a landline ETC, Verizon MA does not terminate any Lifeline subscribers for non-usage in any event. Consequently, should the Department decide to promulgate such a rule, it should exclude ETCs that are not subject to the underlying FCC rule.

- b. Reporting to the Department on a quarterly basis the number of consumer complaints from Massachusetts subscribers regarding its Lifeline service.

Verizon MA pointed out in its letter to the Department dated April 29, 2013, (“Verizon Comments”) that it currently reports complaint (and response) statistics to the Department on a monthly basis pursuant to its Retail Service Quality Plan in far greater detail than would be required of ETCs under this proposal. Verizon MA also reports annually to the FCC and the Department the number of complaints it receives per 1,000 connections, pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 54.422. There is no reason to impose an additional reporting requirement on Verizon MA.

Moreover, Verizon MA does not track complaints from Lifeline customers separately from complaints from other customers, so this rule would impose significant costs on the Company to develop new, Lifeline-specific tracking and reporting systems, with no discernible public benefit. Again, should the Department decide to promulgate this rule, which is unnecessary in light of the FCC's reporting requirements, it should exclude Verizon MA from its scope.

- c. Reporting to the Department on a quarterly basis the amount of Universal Service Fund support received for Massachusetts Lifeline subscribers each month.

Verizon MA agrees with T-Mobile that this rule would provide little to no program value to the Department, for the reasons stated in its comments. *See* T-Mobile Comments at 6-8. In addition, information about ETCs' USF receipts is available on the USAC website, reported quarterly for each month. *See* <http://www.usac.org/about/tools/fcc/filings/2013/q1.aspx>, Appendix LI04. Accordingly, there is no basis or need for this proposed rule.

- d. Filing with the Department, within 60 days of being designated an ETC, the rates, terms, and conditions of the ETC's Lifeline service.
- e. Notifying the Department of any changes to the rates, terms, or conditions of the ETC's Lifeline service 30 days prior to the implementation of the changes.

Verizon MA does not offer a Lifeline service *per se*. Rather, the Lifeline program provides a discount off of the Company's rates for basic exchange services. Those services – unlimited local exchange and measured rate local exchange service – are tariffed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 159, § 19, which also requires Verizon MA to notify the Department of any changes to the rates, terms or conditions of those services in writing at least 30 days before they can take effect. The above proposed rules would therefore be redundant as applied to Verizon MA. If the Department imposes such obligations, they should exclude Verizon MA and any other ETC whose relevant services are tariffed.

- f. Providing to the Department copies of all marketing materials circulated in the Commonwealth for the ETC's Lifeline service within 30 days of the materials' release.

Verizon MA questions the need or purpose of this potential rule. All advertisers in Massachusetts are subject to the Attorney General's consumer protection rules (940 C.M.R. § 3) and Truth in Advertising rules (940 C.M.R. § 6). Moreover, Verizon MA is not aware of any evidence of market failure in advertising specifically for services supported by the Lifeline program that might support the need for governmental review of Lifeline marketing materials. The NCLC argues that Department should review such materials because, "it's critical that information about the Lifeline program be readily accessible, clearly written and easily understood," NCLC Comments at 2, but in this competitive market, ETCs have ample business incentive to ensure that their marketing materials are readily understood. No government intrusion is necessary or justified.

- g. Participating in dispute resolution by the Department's Consumer Division to resolve Lifeline subscriber disputes (including eligibility disputes, program offering issues, and limited equipment related issues, but not matters related to rates or entry)

Verizon MA is already subject to the dispute resolution provisions of the Department's Billing and Termination Rules with respect to its basic exchange services. In addition, Verizon MA has worked with the Department for many years to resolve customer disputes without the need to invoke the formal procedures in those rules. For these reasons, promulgation of this proposed rule would not affect Verizon MA's practices in Massachusetts. Verizon MA does agree with YourTel, however, that such a rule should not reference or incorporate the Billing and Termination Rules. Those rules were written to regulate New England Telephone and Telegraph in a monopoly environment that is long gone and are "grossly excessive and [] impose

unnecessary and unreasonable costs” on telephone providers within their scope and have no place in today’s competitive market. *See YourTel Comments at 5.*

- h. Including the Department’s contact information for consumer complaints on the ETC’s Lifeline advertising, Lifeline subscriber applications, website, Lifeline terms and conditions, initial Lifeline subscriber receipts, and Lifeline subscriber bills, if applicable; and including information about the Department’s dispute resolution process on its website, Lifeline application form, and Lifeline terms and conditions;

This rule is too broad. Verizon MA currently includes the Department’s contact information on its customers’ monthly bills and publishes it in its telephone directories, as required by the Billing and Termination Rules. Verizon MA could relatively easily add that information to its Lifeline application (although the NCLC asserted at the public hearing in this matter that Verizon MA’s application is already too long). It would go too far, however, to require ETCs to include the Department’s contact information on Lifeline advertising. Potential consumers are unlikely to need to contact the Department even before applying for the Lifeline discount, and space limitations may make inclusion of this information unfeasible. In addition, Verizon MA has no “terms and conditions” of basic exchange service other than as stated in its tariff, and it therefore should not be subject to that requirement.

Likewise, Verizon MA already publishes information regarding the Department’s dispute resolution process in its telephone directories, as required by current rules. It would serve no purpose to include this information in its “terms and conditions,” *i.e.* its tariffs, or on its Lifeline application, since an applicant will rarely if ever need to invoke the dispute resolution process at the time of making application to the program. It is sufficient if the application and monthly customer bills advise customers how to direct questions to the Company and the Department, which will lead them to the dispute resolution information in the rare instances they are needed.

- i. Providing public safety answering points (“PSAP”) self-certification annually to the Department.

As a LEC, Verizon MA is required by M.G.L. c. 166, § 14A to provide enhanced 911 service and to provide certain customer information to PSAPs. This requirement has been in place for many years. A new Department regulation requiring Verizon MA to, in effect, certify compliance with this statute is entirely unnecessary and unjustified by any information showing any past failure to comply with the statute.

## **II. Annual ETC Certification and Other Annual Reporting Obligations.**

### **a. Annual sworn statement**

Verizon MA agrees with those commenters who explained that requiring an ETC to file annually a sworn statement as to its compliance with law is unnecessary, duplicative and burdensome. All ETCs have been duly qualified, and Verizon MA has met its ETC obligations for many years. ETCs should be presumed to be in compliance without the need for what would amount to an annual designation process. The Department can address any concern that an ETC is not in compliance with a given obligation in a particular case through a focused investigation of that ETC on that issue.

In addition, ETCs are already subject to reporting and certifications required by 47 C.F.R. § 54.313 (for facilities-based ETCs like Verizon MA) or 47 C.F.R. § 54.422 (for Lifeline-only ETCs) and must make annual compliance filings under 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.416(a) and 54.422(c) and file those with the appropriate state commissions. Even the NCLC, which generally favors more regulation of ETCs, supports the notion of filing copies of the federal reports with the Department in lieu of a Massachusetts annual ETC certification. *See* NCLC letter to Commissioner Geoffrey G. Why dated May 14, 2013 (“NCLC Letter”), at 1.

As for E911 requirements (Exhibit, part II(a)(iii), (iv)), Verizon MA is required by state law to provide E911 service as noted above, and in any event the Department should reasonably presume an ETC's compliance with 911 requirements in the absence of customer complaints or other evidence to the contrary. Moreover, the proposed annual statement regarding financial items (Exhibit, part II(a)(vi), (vii)) is unnecessary – especially in the case of Verizon MA, which files an annual financial report with the Department – overreaching and overly intrusive. The existence of an outstanding tax liability to the Commonwealth or entry of judgment against an ETC in a civil action, for example, says little if anything about the ability of a company to provide service, and any connection with the goal of universal service is far too tenuous to justify the suggested reporting obligation. And the requirement to report any “finding, criminal conviction ... or civil judgment or settlement ... against the ETC” by any court or governmental agency is far too broad in any event, in that the vast majority of such decisions will have no bearing whatsoever on an ETC's ability to provide service.

- b. Certified copies of certifications or reports filed with the FCC or USAC.

Verizon MA does not object to filing a copy of its FCC Form 555 with the Department, but 47 C.F.R. § 54.416(b) already requires such filings, so there is no need for a separate state requirement.

- c. Annual report that includes information specified in 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.422(a)-(b).

As a facilities-based ETC, Verizon MA is already required by 47 C.F.R. § 54.313 to report this information to the FCC and provide a copy to the Department. There is no need for an additional state rule imposing the same obligation.

- d. A copy of the ETC's Lifeline subscriber application(s) in use at the time of the filing of its annual ETC certification.



Verizon MA's Lifeline application is available for review on its website at any time, so there is no need for regulation imposing an annual filing requirement.

Verizon MA does not object to providing the Department with the results of any audits performed pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 54.420(b) within 30 days of the issuance of the final audit report.

### **III. Lifeline Eligibility Criteria.**

As noted in its Comments, Verizon MA does not object to extending the qualifying annual income amount from 135% to 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. That is a relatively easy change in its systems and procedures. The proposed expansion of eligibility to include additional programs such as the WIC program and homeless veterans programs, however, would require costly changes to Verizon MA's internal systems and re-training programs to comply with this Massachusetts-only eligibility standard.

Moreover, expanding eligibility in these ways is not a simple matter. The FCC is currently reviewing whether to add WIC and Veterans' programs to the national eligibility criteria and has sought comment on a host of complex administrative issues that such expansion would raise. *See* Lifeline Reform Order, ¶¶ 483-487. For example, the FCC asked whether there would be "administrative complexities given that WIC benefits are also available to infants and children," whether the Lifeline benefit would attach to the household, and how many households would be affected by the expansion of the criteria. *Id.* at ¶ 485. The FCC also sought comment on how a homeless veteran with no income would be allowed to prove eligibility for the Lifeline discount and also pointed out the "unique difficulties in verifying transient and homeless Lifeline consumers' eligibility...." *Id.* at ¶ 487.

Given these issues, Verizon MA suggests that the Department should refrain from expanding Lifeline eligibility to the WIC and veteran's programs until the FCC determines nationally uniform policies on these issues, in order to maximize the efficiency of ETCs implementing the Lifeline program.

Verizon MA agrees with other ETCs that the government should not require ETCs to notify customers and "potential customers" of changes in Lifeline eligibility criteria. *See* Budget Comments at 1, 4-5; YourTel Comments at 7-8; T-Mobile Comments at 14-15. Current customers have already qualified for the Lifeline program, and ETCs have ample business incentive to notify potential customers of any expansion in eligibility requirements. In addition, the ETCs' Lifeline applications advise prospective customers of the program eligibility requirements, and Verizon MA agrees that ETCs should update their applications to reflect any changes in eligibility criteria. Otherwise, however, the "best practice" is to allow ETCs to decide for themselves the best ways to publicize changes in Lifeline eligibility criteria.

#### **IV. Outreach, consumer safeguards and service quality.**

##### **A. Outreach**

Verizon MA agrees with other commenters that the Department should not impose additional, Massachusetts-specific outreach requirements on ETCs. In this highly competitive market, ETCs – and especially Lifeline-only ETCs – have substantial business incentive to publicize their offerings and, as YourTel noted, "should be permitted to use the means of communication best suited to their particular business models and strategies." YourTel Comments at 8; *see also* T-Mobile Comments at 16. For the same reason, the Department should retire its current outreach requirements, which were developed when Verizon MA was the

sole ETC for the vast majority of telephone subscribers in the Commonwealth and are no longer necessary or appropriate in this era of heated competition.

Verizon MA also notes that in the *Lifeline Reform Order*, the FCC rejected the Joint Board's proposal to adopt mandatory outreach requirements for all ETCs, finding that current FCC outreach guidelines "provide a broadly applicable set of goals without prescribing any specific outreach methods." *Lifeline Reform Order*, ¶ 278. The Department should follow suit and, instead of imposing specific, detailed outreach requirements on ETCs (potentially at substantial cost) should allow ETCs to work within the parameters set by the FCC.<sup>1</sup> A more general approach also has the advantage of remaining relevant even as technology continues to evolve, whereas outreach requirements geared to the currently favored means of communications may soon be outdated.

Verizon MA also opposes a requirement that ETCs disclose in their Lifeline marketing materials "all material terms and conditions associated with the advertised plan." Exhibit at 7. Those terms may be voluminous, and disclosure on all marketing materials would likely overwhelm the intended message of the materials. Such detailed disclosure is inappropriate at the marketing stage of the process in any event, when most readers would not have expressed any interest in purchasing the marketed services. With respect to Verizon MA in particular, the material terms of its basic exchange services are fully disclosed in its publically available tariffs,

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<sup>1</sup> In light of the FCC's decision, the Department must also consider whether it has authority to impose specific outreach requirements on ETCs. Unlike the issue of subscriber eligibility, in which an FCC regulation specifically authorizes state commissions to promulgate eligibility criteria in addition to the FCC's own criteria, *see* 47 C.F.R. § 54.409(a)(3), nothing in the Telecommunications Act or the FCC's regulations authorizes state commissions to impose specific outreach requirements on ETCs, such as requiring specific notices or language to be included on ETC websites, brochures or in texts or email. With respect to websites in particular, Verizon MA states that space on the main page of the Verizon website is extremely limited and valuable. That page is regularly viewed by millions of customers and potential customers who are not eligible for and have no interest in Lifeline in Massachusetts. A requirement to devote any space on that page to Massachusetts Lifeline notices or related requirements, or otherwise use the Verizon website to publicize Lifeline, would impose a substantial burden on Verizon and would be entirely inappropriate.

designed for the very purpose of advising the public of the rates, terms and conditions of the Company's offerings. For these reasons, rather than disclosing all terms and conditions of service, it would be sufficient for marketing materials to state where the reader may find such terms and conditions.

**B. Service Quality**

- a. Offer a basic voice option to eligible Lifeline subscribers with no associated contract term or early termination fee.
- b. Offer a minimum 90 day warranty or return policy for refurbished phones provided to Lifeline subscribers.

Verizon MA's local exchange services are offered pursuant to tariff, not contract, and the tariff does not provide for early termination fees on these services. Likewise, Verizon MA does not provide telephones, refurbished or otherwise, to Lifeline subscribers. Accordingly, neither of these requirements would apply to Verizon MA.

Nevertheless, Verizon MA agrees with Budget Prepay that the rule on refurbished phones would regulate the rates of wireless carriers and would be preempted. *See* Budget Comments at 5-6. As Budget shows, there is a financial trade-off between the length of warranty a carrier offers and the rates the carrier charges for service. By requiring a lengthy, 90-day warranty on refurbished telephones for Lifeline subscribers, this rule would constrain the rates the wireless carrier could charge. It would therefore be preempted under 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(3)(A).

- c. Ensure adequate customer service resources to provide:
  - (i) Trained customer service assistance;
  - (ii) Prompt processing of Lifeline subscriber applications;
  - (iii) Prompt and satisfactory customer assistance and resolution of complaints;
  - (iv) Person-to-person customer service assistance if requested by the subscriber;
  - (v) Prompt response to Department inquiries (for example, confirm receipt of complaint within 1-2 business days and report status or resolve complaint within 5-7 business days); and
  - (vi) Customer service point of contact accessible to the Department.

There is no call for any of these Lifeline service quality regulations. The need to win and retain customers in the competitive market provides more than enough motivation for ETCs to treat their customers well, assist them on request, and resolve disputes in a prompt and fair manner. In addition, Verizon MA agrees with YourTel that a number of these proposals are overly vague and open-ended. *See* YourTel Comments at 8-9. Rules that require “prompt” conduct only beg the question, what is “prompt?” and would create an undue risk of inconsistent implementation. Verizon MA also agrees with YourTel that some of these proposals are extreme and unwarranted. For example, the “person-to-person” customer service requirement would appear to preclude use of VRUs. That would be overly intrusive on ETC’s management of their operations, and would impose significant new personnel costs on Verizon MA to handle the additional workload. Likewise, the strict time limits and status reports on individual consumer claims proposed in rule (v) above are unnecessary and would threaten the efficiency that has been such a benefit of the informal dispute resolution process for Verizon MA, the Department and consumers.

Verizon MA in particular is already subject to myriad service quality and customer service requirements. The Retail Service Quality Plan applies to Lifeline and non-Lifeline customers alike and measures the Company’s service quality performance in great detail – monthly, across twelve metrics and broken down by region and individual wire center. Verizon MA is also subject to the lengthy and excessive dispute resolution provisions of the Billing and Termination Rules, which also apply to Lifeline and non-Lifeline customers. While those procedures are rarely invoked, Verizon MA has long worked with the Department in good faith – and with great success – to resolve customer disputes on an informal basis. Adding yet another layer of service quality regulation applicable solely to Lifeline customers, who are already

protected by the existing rules, would in no way serve the goal of universal service but would merely impose additional compliance costs on Verizon MA. At a minimum, then, the Department should exclude ILECs from any Lifeline service quality regulations.

- d. Offer the same services and benefits to Massachusetts Lifeline subscribers that the ETC offers in other jurisdictions.

This proposed rule is especially troubling. ETCs provide services and “benefits” to subscribers in a given state not in a vacuum but in the context of the underlying services available in that state, the state’s market conditions, regulatory environment and costs of service and any number of additional considerations. Requiring ETCs to import into Massachusetts only the subscriber “benefits” from other states, shorn of the costs and other context in which they are provided elsewhere, is unfair, overreaching and leads to nonsensical results. For example, at the direction of the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission, Verizon’s unlimited local exchange service offering in that state includes the ability to call into Providence from anywhere in the state. The proposed rule would arguably require Verizon MA to allow all Lifeline subscribers to call Providence (or perhaps Boston) without additional charge. More broadly, the suggested rule might be read to require Verizon MA to offer unlimited local exchange service to Massachusetts Lifeline subscribers at the lower rates at which it provides that service in some other states, on the alleged grounds that the lower rate is a “benefit” to the customer. There is no policy basis for such fundamental changes in service in Massachusetts. For yet another example, *see* Budget Comments at 6-7, explaining that the service plans ETCs are able to offer in a state may depend in part on state USF subsidies.<sup>2</sup> The Department should reject this proposed rule and its potential slew of unintended consequences.

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<sup>2</sup> Verizon MA also agrees with Budget that the above rule would regulate a wireless ETC’s rates and would therefore be preempted.

- e. Provide the following information to the Department within one business day of the onset of any service outage lasting at least 30 minutes affecting at least 10% or 200 of the ETC's Massachusetts Lifeline subscribers, whichever is less, or otherwise affecting special facilities in the Commonwealth including 911 PSAPs.

Commenters agree that this proposed rule is excessive. *See* Verizon Comments; YourTel Comments at 9; Virgin Comments at 2-4; T-Mobile Comments at 17-19. Even the NCLC agrees that, “[s]pecific Massachusetts-based outage reporting requirements can await the outcome of FCC proceedings.” NCLC Letter at 4. Commenters have also demonstrated that a one-day reporting requirement would be inconsistent with the FCC’s rule at 47 C.F.R. § 54.422(b) and therefore preempted. *See* Virgin Comments at 3; T-Mobile Comments at 17-18. Verizon MA also agrees with Virgin that the would-be outage reporting requirement is not supported by any rational basis, is unrelated to the advancement of universal service under § 254 of the Act and is inconsistent with the FCC’s reporting processes under 47 C.F.R. § 4.1 *et seq.*

In addition, the proposed reporting obligation would be triggered by the number of Lifeline customers affected by an outage, as opposed to the number of customers in general so affected, and would therefore impose substantial additional costs on Verizon MA. Unlike other ETCs in Massachusetts, Verizon does not offer a Lifeline “service” but applies the Lifeline discount to its local exchange services, which are widely purchased by non-Lifeline customers. Verizon MA complies with the reporting requirements of 47 C.F.R. § 54.422(b) and the Department’s MESO requirement,<sup>3</sup> both of which are triggered by the number of customers in general affected by an outage. But Verizon MA has no means of determining how many Lifeline customers are affected by a given outage, because those customers are served by the same systems and networks that serve Verizon MA’s non-Lifeline customers. Developing systems to

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<sup>3</sup> The Major Extended Service Outage (“MESO”) requirement was imposed in D.P.U. 96-30 and requires Verizon MA to report to the Department any outage of 200 or more customers lasting more than 48 hours, as soon as the Company anticipates that an outage will reach the MESO standard.

provide such finely parsed data, even if possible, would be exceedingly expensive and would provide the Department with very little, if any, useful information over and above what it receives from Verizon MA today.

f. Transition Issues

The Department should not apply the Mass Migration Guidelines to ETCs. The chief concern underlying the Guidelines was the possibility that customers of a CLEC would be left without telephone service if the CLEC ceased operations without sufficient notice. The Guidelines established a detailed set of notice and other requirements to minimize that risk. The massive expansion of consumers' ability to choose communications providers in Massachusetts in the past decade, especially among wireless providers and now wireless Lifeline providers, all but eliminates that risk. *See YourTel Comments at 9* (Lifeline customers can quickly and easily switch carriers). And Verizon MA's customers in particular bear no such risk at all, because Verizon MA's withdrawal as an ETC would merely eliminate the discount on customers' bills; it would not cause them to lose service. Given the ease of switching to a new Lifeline carrier, the possible temporary loss of the discount is no justification for imposing the onerous and anachronistic Mass Migration Guidelines on Verizon MA, or on any other ETC.

With respect to the proposed alternative migration requirements, Verizon MA is already required to notify customers 30 days in advance of any rate increase and would apply this standard were it to withdraw as an ETC. And while Verizon MA would of course cooperate with the Department in addressing any transition issues, a regulation to that effect is unnecessary.

**V. Other Related Matters.**

Verizon MA opposes any requirement that it take action beyond that required by the FCC's regulations to retain eligible Lifeline subscribers during the annual re-certification



process. As others have explained, ETCs have strong business incentives to retain customers by guiding them through the recertification process. *See e.g.*, T-Mobile Comments at 19. In addition, the FCC considered a number of approaches to recertification in the *Lifeline Reform Order* and carefully laid out the responsibilities of ETCs in connection with the FCC's comprehensive recertification program. *See Lifeline Reform Order*, ¶¶ 129-148. Additional requirements at the state level are therefore unnecessary and would impose costs on ETCs to develop non-standard systems and procedures unique to Massachusetts.

#### Conclusion

As demonstrated above, there is little if any need for Massachusetts state regulations governing the Lifeline program and ETCs. Where the Department nevertheless finds such a need, Verizon MA urges the Department to streamline any resulting rules to be consistent with the FCC's regulations and to exclude carriers such as Verizon MA that are already bound by similar Department rules and regulations.

Respectfully submitted,

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By its attorney



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Dated: May 28, 2013