

STATE OF NEW YORK

Public Service Commission

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NEW AREA CODE ON LONG ISLAND APPROVED

— Area Code Expansion Needed to Meet Growing Telecommunication Demands —

Albany, NY—12/11/14—The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved the establishment of a second area code for Suffolk County. The new area code will provide additional much-needed phone numbers for new residents and businesses in Suffolk County. With this decision, local telephone companies will be directed to activate a new area code before the end of the third quarter of 2016.

“The growing proliferation of new telecommunication technologies, multiple household cell phones, and greater use of portable computers, continues to drive demand for new telephone numbers,” said Commission Chair Audrey Zibelman. “Years ago, most families would have a single telephone number. Today, each household and place of business may use several phone numbers, in addition to the numbers assigned to their landlines and cell service. Given the reality of the way we communicate today, a new area code is needed to expand the numbers that are available.”

Earlier this year, the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) informed the Commission that the remaining available central office codes in the 631 area code (Suffolk County) would all be assigned by the third quarter of 2016. When this occurs, the 631 area code will be exhausted and its ability to serve the needs for new numbering in Suffolk County is compromised.

To provide area code relief as required by federal law, the Commission examined “overlay” and “geographic split” options. Based upon its review, the Commission determined that an overlay is the preferred option because it is easier to implement from a technical standpoint and less expensive from a customer standpoint, especially for business customers who could be forced to change signage and branding in the event of a geographic split.

An overlay occurs when a new area code is superimposed on an existing calling area, and, by definition, it results in more than one area code serving the same calling area or region. Under an overlay plan, existing telephone numbers remain unchanged, and all new telephone numbers would be assigned the new area code. With an overlay, even calls to a number in the same area code, would not be completed without first dialing the 3-digit area code, and then the 7-digit number (10-digit dialing).

The geographic area associated with the 631 area code is Suffolk County, New York. Suffolk County is the easternmost portion of Long Island and is home to 1.5 million people living in almost 500,000 households.

The North American Numbering Plan (NANP) was established several decades ago to facilitate the growing need for long distance telephone service and the related need for an integrated nation-wide network. NANP provides the basic numbering scheme for telephone networks in the United States and Canada and in many of the Caribbean nations. Under NANP, the geographic area subject to the plan was subdivided into 83 zones, and each zone was identified by a three-digit code. These three digit codes are now referred to as area codes. Since then and over time, the need for additional numbering resources has prompted the creation of additional area codes. In New York State, the number of area codes has increased from the original five to 15.

The Commission held four public statement hearings before an Administrative Law Judge on July 15 and 16, 2014 concerning these proposals for area code relief in Suffolk County. These hearings were held in Riverhead, Holbrook, Smithtown, and Huntington Station.

The actual three-digit number that will be the new area code will be assigned by NANPA at a later date. To implement the overlay alternative, there will be a six-month period for network preparation, followed by a nine-month period for permissive dialing and a one month period of mandatory dialing. This schedule should be sufficient to permit the activation of central office or NXX codes in the new area code in the first quarter of 2016.

The Commission's decision today, when issued, may be obtained by going to the Commission Documents section of the Commission's Web site at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 14-C-0182 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number". Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission orders may also be obtained from the Commission's Files Office, 14th floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223 (518-474-2500). If you have difficulty understanding English, please call us at 1-800-342-3377 for free language assistance services regarding this press release.