



Public Service Commission

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PSC Approves Overlay for 315 Area Code Region

— Choosing an Overlay Provides the Least Amount of Customer Disruption —

NEW YORK — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today approved an area code overlay in the 315 area code region serving all or part of 18 counties in central New York. The addition of a new area code in central New York was prompted by strong demand for additional telephone numbers. In making its decision, the Commission determined that the best way to meet demand for new telephone numbers in the region and minimize customer impact was to overlay a new area code over the existing area code.

In an earlier recommended decision, an administrative law judge had concluded that a new area code overlay was the best option for area code relief in the 315 region. Department of Public Service staff also recommended the overlay option because it is easier to implement, less expensive, easier for customers to adapt to, and fairer to all customers. In addition, the overlay permits all existing telephone users in the region to keep their entire current phone numbers, including the 315 area code.

Nearly all new area codes created in the United States over the past few years have been implemented via an overlay. Demand for new phone numbers is driven largely by the phenomenal growth of new technology that requires an individual phone number, such as cell phones. With the overlay method, all customers will need to dial 10 digits (the area code plus the 7-digit number) on calls in their area code, and 1 plus 10 digits for calls to numbers outside their area code.

With its decision, the Commission directed all telephone carriers in the 315 area code region to file within 45 days a plan outlining the steps necessary to implement the overlay, including an 11-month permissive dialing period that allows both 7-digit and 10-digit (area code plus 7-digit number) dialing. After this period, only 10-digit dialing will be allowed; and any misdialed calls will be trigger a message directing the caller to dial 10 digits.

Throughout the proceeding, the Commission conducted an extensive public outreach and education program throughout the 315 area code region to alert the public to the proceeding, and to solicit their concerns and opinions. The Commission also held numerous informational forums and public statement hearings, and received many comments from the public via its website.

The North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA), which administers the numbering scheme for telephone networks in the United States and elsewhere, initially advised the Commission in 1999 that the 315 area code was projected to have a shortage of available central office codes (the

first three digits in a 7-digit phone number). However, ongoing number conservation measures prolonged the life of the area code then and in two other subsequent exhaust forecasts in 2007 and 2013. On February 6, 2015, NANPA informed the Commission that the 315 area code will have a shortage of available central office codes by no later than the first quarter of 2017.

There are no additional conservation measures that can eliminate the need for area code relief or extend the time by which relief is needed. However, the Commission reserved its right to reexamine its decision upon review of updated telephone number exhaust data from NANPA due in October.

The 315 area code is located within all or part of 18 counties in central New York, including: Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Oswego, Ostego, St. Lawrence, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates.

The Commission's decision in this case, when issued, may be obtained on the Commission's website by going to the Commission Documents section at www.dps.ny.gov and entering Case Number 07-C-1486 in the input box labeled "Search for Case/Matter Number." Many libraries offer free Internet access. Commission documents 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.