

STATE OF NEW YORK

# Public Service Commission

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## COMMISSION MOVES AHEAD WITH AREA CODE REVIEW

### — Potential Relief for 315 Area Code in the Works —

Albany, NY — 4/23/2008 — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today, after careful re-examination of efforts to date to conserve numbers and reclaim phone numbers in the 315 area code in central and north-central New York State, decided not to delay further its proceeding to determine the best way to prevent the expected exhaustion of central office codes — representing the first three digits in a seven-digit phone number — in the 315 region by 2010.

Currently there are only 136 central office codes remaining available to assign to telecommunications carriers in the more than 100 specific geographic areas or rate centers in area code 315. These central office codes can only be used in the specific rate center they are assigned. It is expected that all the remaining unused central office codes will be assigned by late 2010. To ensure that consumers throughout Central and Northern New York are able to obtain telecommunications services of their choice, a new area code needs to be introduced.

“This Commission has a responsibility to make sure that the residents of the 315 region have adequate numbering resources so that they are able to obtain the telecommunications services of their choice,” said Commission Chairman Garry Brown. “We find nothing that would cause us to consider delaying the process that is required to implement area code relief in the 315 area.”

The Commission's goal is to develop a plan that minimizes disruption and inconvenience to customers while ensuring continued availability of telephone numbers beyond 2010 in the 315 area code region. A White Paper developed by Department of Public Service Staff proposed three options for geographic splits to divide the 315 area code as well as an overlay plan option that assigns a new area code to the same geographic area currently served by 315.

A geographic split would divide the existing 315 code area into two geographic areas, leaving the existing area code to serve a portion and assigning a new area code to the remaining portion. According to Staff's White Paper, the geographic split could occur by dividing an area along identifiable jurisdictional, natural, or physical boundaries, such as, county boundaries and bodies of water, or along telephone exchange boundaries. An overlay plan would assign a new area code to the existing 315 geographic area. Area code relief may be provided by opening up a new code throughout the geographic area of the existing code, in effect "overlying" it.

Whether the Commission adopts a geographic split or overlay area code relief plan, action by the Commission is necessary to ensure the continued availability of telephone numbers in the area currently served by the 315 area code. The 315 area code that has served central New York since the early 1950s is running out of assignable telephone numbers, and implementation of a new area code is required.

The decision to re-examine the need for the current proceeding came as a result of a petition filed by the Public Utility Law Project (PULP) which requested that the Commission delay its proceeding to evaluate 315 area code relief options, and instead, commence an investigation, including a technical conference, to determine if there is even a need for area code relief, based on its belief that existing numbering resources have been misallocated and/or misused, and that if existing numbering resource conservation measures are diligently applied, adequate existing numbering resources may exist to make area code relief unnecessary at this time.

After a detailed examination of PULP's petition, the Commission found that Staff has proactively applied numbering conservation measures throughout the state and that there is no

basis for concluding that the need for relief in the 315 area code is a result of improper procedures in either the assignment or the reclamation of telephone numbers in New York. The Commission also ordered that comments on the options presented in Staff's White Paper would be accepted at least until May 23, 2008.

Before the Commission reaches any decision regarding the best method of providing area code relief, it is essential that consumers, telecommunications providers, businesses, and other interested parties located in the 315 area code have an opportunity to express their views. The Commission will solicit public input through public hearings and educational forums to be held in various locations in central and north-central New York sometime during the next several weeks, and via letters, e-mails and telephone calls to the Commission's toll-free Opinion Line available to consumers.

The Commission will issue a written order reflecting today's action. That order, when available, may be obtained from the Commission's [www.dps.state.ny.us](http://www.dps.state.ny.us) Web site by accessing the Commission's File Room section of the homepage and referencing Case 07-C-1486. 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).