

STATE OF NEW YORK

# Public Service Commission

William M. Flynn, Chairman

Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223

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<http://www.dps.state.ny.us>

FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATELY

05047/05C0237,05C0242

## PSC Announces Forums and Public Statement Hearings on Proposed Phone Company Mergers

Albany, NY—7/14/05—The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today announced a series of educational forums and public statement hearings to seek consumer views on Verizon Communications, Inc.'s proposal to merge with MCI, Inc., and SBC Communications, Inc.'s proposal to merge with AT&T Corporation (AT&T). The forums are designed to provide information to consumers about the proposed mergers and related issues, and to accept public comments for consideration by the Commission in its examination of the proposals. The dates, times, and locations of the forums are:

### **Buffalo – Thursday, July 21, 2005**

Educational Forum: 12:00 noon – 1:00 P.M.

Public Statement Hearing: 1:00 P.M.

Buffalo City Council Chambers

Buffalo City Hall, Room 1417

65 Niagara Square

Buffalo, NY

### **New York City – Tuesday, July 26, 2005**

Educational Forum: 3:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Public Statement Hearing: 4:00 P.M.

City University of New York (CUNY)

Graduate Center

First Floor – Baisley Powell Elabash Recital

Hall and Lobby

365 Fifth Ave. (34<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Ave.)

New York, NY

### **Albany – Thursday, July 28, 2005**

Educational Forum: 6:00 – 7:00 P.M.

Public Statement Hearing: 7:00 P.M.

East Greenbush Town Hall

225 Columbia Turnpike

Rensselaer, NY

The proposed mergers are taking place at a critical juncture in the telecommunications market, not only in New York, but nationwide. The proposed mergers, if approved, represent integration of a Regional Bell Operating Company and a traditional long distance provider (which also provides local exchange services) at a time when telecommunications voice and data alternatives are being widely provided not only by the traditional wireline telephone companies, but also by the cable industry, broadband Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providers and wireless carriers. These changes in technology are providing consumers with a variety of choices from different service providers. Customer choice is essential, and New York has more customer options available than almost any other state. The proposed mergers are being examined with a view toward maintaining this important customer benefit.

### **Explaining the Proposals**

Department of Public Service staff will conduct a one-hour educational forum for consumers at each of the locations listed below. Staff will summarize its analysis of the proposals, the key issues being examined, the procedural steps and the schedule for the cases established by the Commission. Informational handouts prepared by staff will be available. Knowledgeable staff also will be available to answer questions.

Promptly following each consumer educational forum, interested members of the public will have an opportunity to present their views before an Administrative Law Judge at a public statement hearing. It is not necessary to make an appointment in advance or to provide written materials in order to speak. Speakers will be called in the order in which they sign up at the door, on a first-come, first-served basis. Everyone wishing to comment will be heard or other acceptable arrangements will be made. A court reporter will transcribe all public statements. The transcripts, as well as a summary of the public comments, will be available to the Commission for consideration.

TDD users may request the presence of a sign language interpreter at the public statement hearings. To make a request, please call the New York State Department of Public Service's Human Resource Management office at (518) 474-2520 through the New York Relay Service at 1-800-622-1220 or have a representative call collect directly to the office. Disabled persons who require special accommodations should contact the Department of Public Service's Human Resource Management office at (518) 474-2520. All requests should be made as soon as possible.

### **Other Ways To Comment**

Persons not wishing to attend or who are unable to attend the public statement hearings may comment (in English or Spanish) on the proposed mergers by mailing their written statements to: Honorable Jaclyn A. Brillling, Secretary, New York State Public Service Commission, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1350. Statements should reference "Case 05-C-0237—Verizon-MCI Merger" and/or "Case 05-C-0242—SBC-AT&T Merger" and should be mailed no later than Monday, August 22, 2005.

Other alternatives available for submitting comments for consideration by the Commission, include:

**Toll-free Opinion Line:** Interested persons may call a special toll-free Opinion Line at 1-800-335-2120. This phone line is set up to receive comments about the proceedings from in-state callers, 24 hours a day. Callers should press "2" to leave comments about the proposed mergers.

**The Internet:** Comments also may be submitted via the "PSC Comment Form" in the "Contact Us" file accessed through the homepage of the Commission's consumer Web site. The Web site address is <http://www.AskPSC.com> and comments are downloaded regularly. Many libraries offer free Internet access.

All statements and comments received by the Commission are placed in the public case file and be made available for public inspection in the Commission's file room. Statements and comments should be received no later than Monday, August 22, 2005. The joint Verizon-MCI petition and the joint SBC-AT&T petition can be viewed at the Commission's Offices, Central Files, 14<sup>th</sup> floor, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY or online at <http://www.AskPSC.com>