



For Immediate Release: 10/13/2021

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21103 / 21-C-0473

Public Comment Sought on Potential New Area Code in 516 Region

Nassau County to Exhaust Supply of Telephone Numbers by 3rd Quarter of 2023

ALBANY — The New York State Public Service Commission (Commission) today announced it is seeking public comment on a petition to add a new area code within the current 516 area code in Nassau County. Comments are due December 13, 2021.

The Commission is considering a petition filed on September 2, 2021, by SomosGov, Inc. (Somos), in its role as the North American Numbering Plan Administrator, which requests approval to overlay a new area code within Nassau County, which is currently covered by the 516-area code. The petition seeks an effective date of the new area code in the first quarter of 2023.

In accordance with standard telephone industry guidelines, Somos based its petition on an initial forecasted projection showing that the current 516-area code will exhaust its supply of available numbers in the third quarter of 2023. The petition proposes an area code overlay as relief for the forecasted exhaustion. An overlay option means that an additional area code is used throughout the entire geographic area for new telecommunications services, while existing phone numbers are not affected.

All new area codes created in the United States and New York State over the past several 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, tablets and other electronic devices.

According to the petition, all existing Nassau County wireline and wireless telephone customers in the overlay area would retain their current 516 area code and telephone numbers, and the new area code would be assigned to new phone numbers once 516 is fully exhausted.

Subsequent to submitting its petition, as a result of the most recent exhaust analysis, Somos revised the forecasted exhaust projection for the 516-area code to the second quarter of 2023 due to an increase in the demand for numbers.

Implementation of the new area code (and its three-digit identification) would occur following Commission approval of the petition and normally requires concurrent implementation of mandatory ten-digit dialing (whereby the three-digit area code and seven-digit telephone number are required to complete a call) for all calls, whether local or long-distance.

However, by the time the proposed Nassau County overlay area code becomes effective, customers in the 516-area code will already have transitioned to mandatory 10-digit dialing due to the national implementation of the 9-8-8 three-digit hotline to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which is occurring now. The timeline to implement the proposed area code will be shorter than in other overlay implementations because there would be no requirement for a permissive dialing period (during which the ability to continue to complete calls via seven-digit dialing while also making ten-digit dialing available during the transition). Following a nine-month period for customer education and network preparation, implementation is expected to be completed no later than the first quarter of 2023.

Ways to Comment: There are several other ways to provide your comments. Comments should refer to Case 21-C-0473.

Internet or Mail: Go to www.dps.ny.gov, then click on "Search" and enter 21-C-0473 in the "Search by Case Number" field, and then click on "Post Comments" at the top right of the page or send comments by email to the Secretary to the Commission at secretary@dps.ny.gov.

Alternatively, comments may be mailed to the Hon. Michelle L. Phillips, Secretary, New York State Public Service Commission, Three Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1350. All written comments will become part of the record considered by the Commission and may be accessed on the Department of Public Service website by searching the case number, as described above, and clicking on the "Public Comments" tab.

Toll-Free Opinion Line: You may call the Opinion Line at 1-800-335-2120. This number is set up to take comments about pending cases from in-State callers, 24-hours a day. These comments are not transcribed verbatim, but a summary is provided to the Commission. All submitted comments should refer to Case 21-C-0473. Although comments will be accepted throughout the pendency of this case, to ensure timely consideration by the parties, public comments are requested by December 13, 2021.

The Commission is also considering holding virtual public statement hearings. If hearings are to be held, the dates and times will be announced.

The petition 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 21-C-0473 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.