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Federal Communications Commission

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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FCC AUTHORIZES VERIZON TO PROVIDE LONG DISTANCE SERVICE IN MARYLAND, WASHINGTON, D.C., AND WEST VIRGINIA

Verizon Becomes Second Regional Bell Company to Obtain Authorization to Provide Long Distance Service Throughout its Region

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that it voted to approve Verizon's application to provide in-region, interLATA service originating in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia. Approval of Verizon's multi-state application promises benefits to consumers by making increased competition in all markets for telecommunications services possible.

Verizon stated in its application that competing carriers serve approximately 533,000 lines in Maryland, 193,000 lines in Washington, D.C., and 32,000 lines in West Virginia.

With the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (1996 Act), Congress envisioned fundamental, pro-competitive changes in the telecommunications markets by making a BOC's entry into the long distance market subject to it first opening its local service market to competition. A BOC satisfies this contingency by demonstrating compliance with section 271 of the 1996 Act. After a BOC files a section 271 long distance application with the FCC, the FCC has 90 days to determine whether a BOC has taken the statutorily required steps to open its local telecommunications markets to competition, including compliance with the 1996 Act's 14-point "competitive checklist" in section 271.

Since the passage of the 1996 Act, the FCC has denied five long distance applications and now has approved applications to provide in-region, long distance service in 37 states and the District of Columbia. Additionally, applications for 16 states have been withdrawn. Currently, there are section 271 applications for five states – SBC's Nevada application, Qwest's multi-state application for New Mexico, Oregon, and South Dakota, and SBC's application for Michigan – pending before the Commission. A summary of all section 271 applications can be accessed at the following FCC web page:

www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/in-region_applications/

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The FCC emphasizes that Verizon must continue to comply with the section 271 checklist requirements, and the Commission has a number of enforcement tools at its disposal to ensure compliance, including imposing penalties or suspension of approval.

-FCC-

Docket No.: WC 02-384

Action by the Commission March 19, 2003, by Memorandum Opinion and Order (FCC 03-57). Commissioners Copps and Martin approving in part, concurring in part, and issuing separate statements; Commissioner Adelstein issuing a statement.

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News about the Federal Communications Commission can also be found on the Commission's web site www.fcc.gov.