

**PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON  
STAFF REPORT  
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: June 26, 2001**

REGULAR AGENDA   X   CONSENT AGENDA      EFFECTIVE DATE           

**DATE:** June 26, 2001

**TO:** Phil Nyegaard

**FROM:** Sterling Sawyer Through Cynthia VanLanduyt

**SUBJECT:** Joint petition of Qwest Corporation, Verizon and Sprint to postpone start date of number pooling.

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

The Commission should instruct the telecommunications industry to proceed with the implementation of 1000 block pooling in the 541 area code as ordered. In 541 rate centers where a formal request for number assignment is received, a 1000 number block is to be made available under release 1.4 software format.

The October 1, 2001 date for full implementation of number pooling in 503/971 area should be deferred to no later than December 1, 2001. With the exception of the final implementation date, the industry should proceed with the 503/971 area pooling timelines established in the March 16, 2001 pooling implementation meeting.

**DISCUSSION:**

Thousand-block pooling is a telephone number assignment process designed to increase the Telecommunications industry ability to more efficiently utilize all available numbers. As the term implies, number pooling is the process of breaking an existing prefix code of 10,000 numbers into 10 blocks of 1,000 numbers and assigning those smaller blocks as required.

The FCC has granted the Oregon PUC interim authority to implement number pooling in all three of its area codes. OPUC Order 01-208, entered March 5, 2001, (see attachment 1) established the implementation schedule for 1000 block pooling in all three of Oregon's area codes. The schedule implements 1000 block pooling in the 541 area first because of the projected number exhaust of that area's available numbers by the end of 2002. June 30, 2001 is the target date for 541 pooling. The 503/971 area code will implement pooling by September 30, 2001.

At the time that Order 01-208 was issued, pooling software release 3.0 was still under test and development. The software was scheduled for release to the western region of the US on November 5, 2000 but that release was deferred. In recognition of possible difficulties with the software and other industry-wide coordination, the Commission order granted some leeway in the pooling implementation by adding the clause "or as soon after those dates as practicable".

On June 20, 2001, the industry petitioned the Commission, (see attachment 2) to reconsider the implementation dates of 1000 block pooling in Oregon. The anticipated software release 3.0 has not been released by the North American Numbering Council (NANC) for use in the Western Region. Software release 3.0 is operating in the Eastern Region but is having "protocol" problems that increase with the frequency of usage. For this reason, the large incumbent carriers have elected not to implement software release 3.0 in Oregon.

Software release 1.4 is available for use but requires a greater effort to implement and will eventually need to be converted to 3.0. The industry wishes to avoid this duplication of labor costs of implementing both software releases by extending the implementation schedule of number pooling.

The Telecommunications Industry requests the July 1, 2001 date for implementation of 1000 block number pooling in the 541 area and the October 1, 2001 date for implementation of 1000 block pooling in the 503/971 area be delayed until data transmission problems with software release 3.0 are resolved. On June 18, the FCC announced the selection of the national number pooling administrator and the objective of the roll out of national number pooling in March of 2002. The open ended extension of the implementation of number pooling could lead to scheduling conflicts between the PUC's interim authority and the national pooling administrator operating under FCC direction. For this reason, the period of any delay should not be allowed to extend Oregon number pooling implementation past December 31, 2001.

Staff agrees that release 3.0 of the pooling software is the cost efficient way for the industry to implement 1000 block pooling but believes that costs to the customers for the projected requirement of another area code in rural Oregon in 2003 will offset those savings. The relatively small size of the communities in the 541 area leads to poor number usage under the old 10,000 block number assignment criteria. Continuation of 10,000-block assignment will only serve to increase those inefficiencies. Number pooling has the potential of deferring the relief of the 541 Area Code but only if it is implemented in time to allow full utilization of the existing numbers. Pooling under software release 1.4 or release 3.0 format can accomplish this.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Commission should maintain the scheduled implementation date of July 1, 2001 for number pooling in the 541 area. Number pooling in the 541 area prior to the formal release of software release 3.0 is to be done under software 1.4 on blocks of numbers specifically required.

The implementation date for number pooling in the 503/971 area codes should be deferred until software release 3.0 is available or until December 1, 2001, which ever shall come first. Thousand block number identification and all other pooling requirements identified in the March 16, 2001 pooling implementation meeting should remain as scheduled.