

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Telcordia Technologies, Inc. Petition to Reform Amendment 57 and to Order a Competitive Bidding Process for Number Portability Administration)	WC Docket No. 07-149
)	
Petition of Telcordia Technologies, Inc. to Reform or Strike Amendment 70, to Institute Competitive Bidding for Number Portability Administration, and to End the NAPM LLC’s Interim Role in Number Portability Administration Contract Management)	WC Docket No. 09-109
)	
Telephone Number Portability)	CC Docket No. 95-116

**COMMENTS
OF
NTCA–THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION**

I. INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association (“NTCA”) hereby submits its comments in response to the Public Notice¹ seeking comment on the North American Portability Management LLC’s (“NAPM”) Local Number Portability (“LNP”) Transition Oversight Plan (“*Transition Oversight Plan*”).² The *Transition Oversight Plan* relates to the Federal Communications Commission’s (“Commission”) conditional selection of Telcordia Technologies, Inc. d/b/a

¹ Wireline Competition Bureau Seeks Comment on the North American Portability Management LLC’s Transition Oversight for Local Number Portability Administrator Contract, Public Notice, DA 15-554 (rel. May 7, 2015).

² Letter from Todd D. Daubert, Counsel to NAPM LLC, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket Nos. 07-149 and 09-109, CC Docket No. 95-116, Attach. (fil. Apr. 27, 2015) (“*Transition Oversight Plan*” or “*Plan*”).

iconectiv, as the next local number portability administrator.³ NTCA herein encourages the FCC to carefully monitor the transition to a new LNP administrator with an eye towards limiting the cost burden on, and any disruptions to, the operations of small carriers. The March 27, 2015 *LNPA Selection Order* concluded that any burden on small carriers arising out of the transition would be mitigated if the LNP platform interface remains substantially the same as it is today.⁴ NTCA urges the Commission to ensure – and not just assume – that the new administrator will follow through on this requirement and also that the new administrator will conduct substantial and meaningful technical and logistical outreach to small carriers. In addition, the Commission must ensure that the *Transition Oversight Plan* is updated from its present form and that small carrier representatives have a “seat at the table” during that process.

II. THE TRANSITION TO A NEW LNP ADMINISTRATOR MUST ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION FOR SMALL CARRIERS, MINIMIZE BURDENS ON SUCH PROVIDERS, AND INCLUDE EXTENSIVE OUTREACH TO THEM

As an initial matter, a cursory review of the *Transition Oversight Plan* reveals that it is devoid of meaningful detail. While the NAPM commits to “update the Plan as appropriate,”⁵ the *Plan* lacks any vehicle for smaller carriers to voice their concerns and to provide feedback and input into the updating process. NTCA therefore urges the Commission to ensure that small carriers have the opportunity to be part of the process going forward and that the *Transition Oversight Plan* is consistent with Section III. D. of the *LNPA Selection Order*.

³ Telcordia Technologies, Inc. Petition to Reform Amendment 57 and to Order a Competitive Bidding Process for Number Portability Administration et al., WC Docket No. 07-149 et al., Order, FCC 15-35 (rel. Mar. 27, 2015) (“*LNPA Selection Order*”).

⁴ *Id.*, ¶ 154.

⁵ *Transition Oversight Plan*, p. 1.

For example, noticeably absent from the *Transition Oversight Plan* is any discussion of how any transition costs will be apportioned among various providers. The *LNPA Selection Order* expresses the Commission’s confidence that the impact on small providers – including any unforeseen financial impact – will be mitigated by the requirement that the Number Portability Administration Center (“NPAC”) interface functionality remain unchanged. Despite a discussion of this issue in the *LNPA Selection Order*, any consideration of how any costs will be apportioned among providers or recovered by smaller providers is absent from the *Transition Oversight Plan*. Rather than simply hoping that this transition will be seamless for smaller providers with any burdens mitigated, this transition must be managed closely and to ensure consistency with the Commission’s expectations in this regard in approving a change in administrator.

In terms of the NPAC interface, as the Commission well knows, the Request for Proposal issued for a new LNP Administrator requires that no changes be made to the interface, and the *LNPA Selection Order* cites such fact as support for the Commission’s belief that the selection of Telecordia will not have a material impact on the transition costs borne by small carriers. However, the *LNPA Selection Order* states that “smaller providers that use the web-based Graphic User Interface (GUI) ‘may need to be familiarized with a slightly different screen layout, but the fields are specified and thus must be the same.’”⁶ At present, the *Transition Oversight Plan* is silent on this issue, and it does not discuss the outreach and education that must be provided to small carriers to assure their “familiarity” with the different screen layout and any other changes that may be made. The Commission should require that the NAPM solicit

⁶ *LNPA Selection Order*, ¶ 154. Internal citations omitted.

industry input on this issue and incorporate small business input on this issue into the *Transition Oversight Plan*.

The *Transition Oversight Plan* states that the NAPM intends to utilize the North American Numbering Council (“NANC”) as a vehicle for industry stakeholder engagement, small carriers included. However, the NANC only meets four times each year. With the numerous other issues that must be considered by that body, it is difficult to envision how these quarterly meetings could devote sufficient time to industry outreach and enable smaller carriers to properly voice, and the NANC to properly evaluate, concerns pertaining to such an important and multifaceted issue. Instead, the NAPM itself should include at least one small carrier representative as part of its decision-making process effective immediately and continuing throughout the transition process – or the NAPM should establish a working group of small carrier representatives for more frequent interaction and guidance on any issues that may arise in connection with transition planning.

NTCA further has substantial concerns with the “testing” provisions of the *Transition Oversight Plan*. The plan at present contains little more than vague assurances that the necessary testing will take place and promises to work with industry stakeholders and the public safety and law enforcement community. To be sure, NTCA is sensitive to the reality that the transition process has just begun. NTCA also understands that certain portions of the testing regime may need to be kept confidential for security purposes. However, coupled with the lack of small carrier input into the process thus far, there is palpable concern among small carriers and those that represent them that the testing regime ultimately adopted by NAPM will not sufficiently consider the needs of small carriers.

In addition, the *Plan* states that the NAPM will oversee the hiring of both a “third party testing entity”⁷ and a “Transition Oversight Manager.”⁸ Here again, there is no commitment or even a recognition of the need to include small carriers in the decision-making process in hiring these outside parties. NTCA members are understandably concerned that these outside entities may not sufficiently engage small carriers throughout the transition and testing process.

Finally, the Commission should make clear that to the extent difficulties with the transition lead to any delays or difficulties in processing ports, carriers are not liable in terms of complaints filed at state commissions or the FCC. Again, the *Transition Oversight Plan* does not contemplate this important issue.

In closing, NTCA is sensitive to the fact that the LNPA transition process is in its earliest stages. However, small carrier engagement has to this point been virtually nonexistent. Many of the shortcomings described here may likely arise because small carriers have not been included thus far in the drafting and development of the *Transition Oversight Plan*. Thus, to meet the Commission’s expectations as stated in the *LNPA Selection Order*, NTCA urges the Commission and the NAPM to “take a step back” and to better and more effectively engage the small carrier industry as it updates and executes the *Transition Oversight Plan*.

III. CONCLUSION

For the above-discussed reasons, NTCA urges the Commission to take a stronger oversight role in the creation of the *Transition Oversight Plan*, specifically with an eye towards limiting the cost burden on and any disruptions to the operations of small carriers.

⁷ *Transition Oversight Plan*, p. 4.

⁸ *Id.*, p. 1.

Respectfully submitted,



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