STATE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IOWA UTILITIES BOARD

IN RE:)	
AMENDMENTS TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE REGULATIONS [199 IAC 22]))))	Docket No. RMU-2015-0002

COMMENTS OF THE VOICE ON THE NET COALITION

The Voice on the Net Coalition ("VON")¹ hereby submits its comments in response to the Iowa Utilities Board's ("Board") November 1, 2016, Order Requesting Additional Comments on proposed rule revisions to 199 IAC 22 ("Order"), and the November 15, 2016, modifications to the Order.

Discussion

VON supports the Board's proposed changes to the definitions of "Telephone utility," and the addition of definitions for "Information service," "Internet protocol-enabled service," and "Voice over internet protocol service." The proposed changes align with federal law and recognize that the Board does not have jurisdiction over VoIP or IP-enabled services. The Board action is also consistent with decisions by at least 31 other states that do not exercise regulatory authority over IP communications.

Under federal law, information services are exempt from state regulation. While the FCC has asserted limited jurisdiction over interconnected VoIP services, it has not classified interconnected VoIP as a telecommunications service. The FCC has imposed a number of

¹ The VON Coalition works to advance regulatory policies that enable Americans to take advantage of the promise and potential of IP enabled communications. VON Coalition members are developing and delivering voice and other communications applications that may be used over the Internet. For more information, see www.von.org.

specific obligations, including, requirements to provide Enhanced 911, assist with law enforcement access, contribute to the Federal Universal Service Fund, protect customer proprietary network information, and provide customers notice before discontinuing service. In none of these actions, however, has the FCC granted the states authority to impose any other specific obligations on interconnected VoIP providers, other than state USF contributions where such contributions are not inconsistent with federal USF obligations and the payment of state and local fees to support the 911 network. The Board's proposed changes acknowledge these FCC actions.

The Board's proposals are also consistent with the actions of at least 31 other states and the District of Columbia, which have already codified regulatory "safe harbors" for VoIP or IP-enabled communications.⁴ These states have recognized that there is no benefit to imposing legacy telephone regulations on VoIP, and that investment in broadband facilities may be lost if regulatory ambiguities are allowed to remain in place.

² First Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WC Docket No. 04-36, FCC 05-116, (rel. Jun. 3, 2005) ("VoIP 911 Order"); Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WC Docket No. 06-122, FCC 06-94 (rel. Jun. 27, 2006) (imposing USF requirements); Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WC Docket No. 04-36, FCC 07-22 (rel. Apr. 2, 2007) (imposing CPNI requirements); Report and Order, WC Docket No. 04-36, FCC 09-40 (May 13, 2009) (imposing discontinuance requirements).

³ See VoIP 911 Order, supra note 2 ¶ 52.

⁴ Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, VON supports the Board's proposed changes.

Respectfully submitted,

VOICE ON THE NET COALITION

_/s/___

Glenn S. Richards
Executive Director
1200 Seventeenth Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20036
(202) 663-8215
glenn.richards@pillsburylaw.com

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