Dear Chairman Stefano and Members of the Senate Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure Committee,

My name is Eric Fitzgerald Reed and I lead Verizon's Public Policy & State Government Affairs team for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I am submitting this written testimony regarding Verizon's copper discontinuance initiative.

VERIZON COPPER DISCONTINUANCE IN PENNSYLVANIA

On September 9, 2026, Verizon filed an application with the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") seeking authority to discontinue Plain Old Telephone Service ("POTS") over copper in portions of Pennsylvania as part of the transition to modern networks. Customers themselves are leading this transition. Over the last 25 years, Pennsylvanians have abandoned more than 7 million ILEC copper landlines in favor of newer technologies such as cable, fiber and wireless services. Today, Verizon's copper network operates at only a small fraction of its peak capacity, with only 3% of the locations in Verizon's Pennsylvania territory that could have been served by copper at its peak still using copper POTS service from Verizon. Not surprisingly, Pennsylvania trends track with nationwide data where consumers have made clear that they do not want copper-based voice services anymore. From 2014 to 2024, subscribers using copper last-mile connections fell nationwide by 81%. A full 92% of US adults report that they use wireless phones only or mostly to meet their calling needs.

To be clear, copper will not be discontinued to customers who do not have an FCC-approved modern alternative available. If copper is their only choice, those customers will stay on copper until an alternative becomes available. Verizon is discontinuing copper-based residential and business legacy voice service only at locations where existing POTS customers have one of the modern alternatives listed in our FCC filing, which includes Verizon fiber or wireless service or competitive service from at least one of ten third parties, including AT&T, T-Mobile, Comcast, and Charter. The FCC has strict standards that must be satisfied before a service can be considered a replacement service. Verizon's fiber-based voice service, fixed wireless voice replacement, and

mobile wireless service—as well as the other replacements on which Verizon relies—satisfy the FCC standards.

PENNSYLVANIA CONSUMERS BENEFIT FROM MODERN TECHNOLOGIES

Copper infrastructure is too slow to meet modern needs, many decades old, costly to maintain, and vulnerable to damage and theft. It benefits the Commonwealth and its citizens for providers to direct infrastructure investments toward high-speed networks that Pennsylvanians want and to relieve them from maintaining decades-old copper networks that customers are abandoning, while ensuring that consumers continue to have reliable access to voice service and 911 emergency services.

The FCC's Build America Agenda provides a blueprint for making it easier and faster for service providers to retire copper and modernize communications infrastructure across the nation including here in Pennsylvania.

Investing in modern telecommunications networks while transitioning away from static, legacy copper-based networks, serves the public interest for several reasons.

First, Verizon's copper discontinuance initiative will drive investment toward networks of the future and reduce the need to devote resources to legacy infrastructure of the past. Investments will free up billions of dollars for new, dynamic networks, instead of forcing service providers to keep investing in old, deteriorating networks. Keeping resources locked up in old copper-based POTS networks will suppress unleashing investments in more modern networks.

Second, the cost of maintaining POTS networks has skyrocketed in recent years and continues to increase. Verizon spends billions of dollars each year to maintain its legacy copper network. These costs are enormous because of, among other things, rising costs of copper and the need for replacement parts that are increasingly difficult to procure as obsolete equipment is discontinued. Copper is also prone to theft, and a

declining customer base makes copper more expensive to maintain on a per-customer basis—meaning as time goes by each copper customer consumes disproportionately more resources. Every dollar Verizon spends maintaining aging, little-used copper infrastructure diverts critical investment away from future-ready networks that customers demand.

Third, Verizon is addressing consumer demand and choice by transitioning away from slow, inefficient copper-based services customers no longer want. Last-mile copper connections to customer premises were designed for phone calls, not today's heavy Internet usage.

Fourth, copper is also energy inefficient, particularly when compared to modern alternatives. Decommissioning the copper network will yield substantial environmental benefits. Powering down outdated antiquated analog equipment will save millions of kWh of energy and free up valuable space. Additionally, recovering and repurposing the highly sought-after copper lines will supply critical materials for modern technology.

CONSUMER VOICE COMMUNICATIONS TRENDS

Almost four out of five U.S. adults use wireless-only for voice, with less than 4% of U.S. adults preferring landlines for phone calls. Today, wireless services account for roughly 83% of voice phone lines nationwide. In particular, consumers now regularly turn to fixed wireless service. Across the United States, fixed wireless access customers—particularly Verizon's millions of wireless home customers—are satisfied with their service. Verizon's use of its copper-based voice services continues to decrease and is consistent with broader consumer trends. Allowing Verizon to decommission its legacy copper networks will help to transition to more efficient high-speed networks that Pennsylvania residents and businesses actually use.

VERIZON'S "LEAVE NO CUSTOMER BEHIND" PLEDGE

Verizon will not leave customers behind as part of this process. We will work to ensure that this is a smooth transition for copper-based POTS customers in discontinuance areas. Customers without an alternative option will remain on our copper network as part of our "Leave No Customer Behind" pledge. This means that if an alternative service is unavailable (through Verizon fiber, Frontier fiber, Verizon wireless/fixed wireless service or a competitor's service like cable or mobile/fixed wireless), the customer will remain on our copper-wire network.

AFFORDABILITY

Verizon has pledged to offer pricing for replacement services comparable to what is offered for copper POTS today. Indeed, Verizon's replacement service that it will offer to copper POTS customers are affordable. Verizon's fixed wireless landline replacement service, and Verizon's fiber voice service costs $20.00 to $30.00 per month, plus taxes, surcharges, and fees. Verizon's post-paid mobile wireless subscriptions are available for $30.00 per month, plus taxes, surcharges, and fees. Prepaid mobile wireless service through Visible by Verizon is available starting at $19.00 per month.

CONCLUSION

We look forward to working with our customers, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and the Office of Consumer Advocate as we continue our copper discontinuance initiative in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This is an important effort to transition Pennsylvania consumers from deteriorating copper-based networks to more modern infrastructure networks like fiber and wireless that support broadband expansion and Internet access. These investments that Verizon is making to support this transition will provide Pennsylvanians with access to more modern networks and technologies that will enhance their connectivity demands.

Thank you for time and consideration of this written testimony.

Eric Fitzgerald Reed
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Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio, Minnesota and Wisconsin Region