

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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J. Dennis O'Brien  
Betsy Wergin

Chair  
Commissioner  
Commissioner  
Commissioner  
Commissioner

In the Matter of State Certification and  
Submission of Study Area Boundary Data on  
Behalf of Minnesota Incumbent Local  
Exchange Carriers and Annual Process for  
Updating the Data

ISSUE DATE: June 26, 2013

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ORDER ACCEPTING DIGITAL  
EXCHANGE BOUNDARY MAP AS  
OFFICIAL TELEPHONE EXCHANGE  
BOUNDARY MAP AND APPROVING  
FOR SUBMISSION TO FCC

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

On November 6, 2012, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) released a Report and Order (Study Area Boundary Order) that established requirements for the collection of study area boundaries for purposes of implementing various reforms adopted as part of the Universal Service Fund/Intercarrier Compensation (USF/ICC) Transformation Order.<sup>1</sup>

On February 26, 2013, the Bureau released a subsequent Order on Reconsideration that adopted certain modifications and clarifications to the requirements for the data collection. As set forth in the orders, each independent local exchange carrier (ILEC) must certify and submit data on the boundary(ies) of the area(s) it serves in a state (study area boundary), or allow a state entity to submit and certify the data on its behalf.<sup>2</sup>

On March 1, 2013, the Minnesota Telecom Alliance (MTA) joined the Minnesota Department of Commerce (the Department) in introducing a joint project whereby the MTA and the Department would collaborate to assist Minnesota ILECs in complying with the Study Area Boundary Order. All

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<sup>1</sup> Study Area Boundary Order, 27 FCC Rcd 13528. at ¶¶ 2-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at ¶¶ 2 and 16 (modifying the *Study Area Boundary Order* by allowing states to certify to the accuracy of the data they submit, rather than requiring ILECs to make the certification); *Study Area Boundary Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 13528, ¶ 17 (allowing state entities to submit shapefiles on behalf of the states' ILECs).

Minnesota ILECs agreed to participate in the project. The ILECs further agreed to allow the Department, with Commission approval, to certify and submit Minnesota's study area boundary data.

On May 13, 2013, the Department submitted comments recommending that the Commission accept the digital exchange boundary map that will be submitted to the FCC by June 28, 2013 as Minnesota's official exchange boundary map. The DOC also proposed a process for annually updating the study area boundary data.

On May 31, 2013, the MTA and CenturyLink filed reply comments.

On June 20, 2013, the Commission met to consider the matter.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Background**

For approximately 50 years, the Department has maintained paper maps of the state's official telephone exchange boundaries. The maps, which are organized by county, incorporate all boundary changes that have occurred during that time.

For approximately 20 years, the Minnesota Department of Public Service (now the Department) has attempted to digitize the paper maps. While intended to duplicate the official paper maps, the digital maps were never verified by ILECs.

The Department has entered into a contract with the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office to allow ILECs to efficiently participate in the review and verification process. By April 30, 2013, each ILEC was asked to designate a contact who was given access to a secure website, to review the existing digital exchange boundaries. ILECs were asked to either agree to their boundaries, or propose changes. ILECs were also asked to review their neighboring ILECs' proposed changes to permit them to come to agreement on where the boundaries should be.

The State must certify and submit all boundary area data to the FCC by June 28, 2013. To ensure that the boundary area data does not become outdated, the FCC's Study Area Boundary Order requires submission of updated data by March 15 of each year, beginning the year following the initial data submissions. In addition, all study area boundary data must be recertified every two years.

Finally, the Department proposed a process for review and approval of proposed annual updates to the study area boundary data.

### **II. Commission Action**

The Commission has reviewed the record in this matter, including the Study Area Boundary Orders of the FCC, and the filings of the parties. The Commission will, with the agreement of the participating ILECs and the Department, accept the digital telephone exchange boundary map as Minnesota's official telephone exchange boundary map. Further, the Commission will approve the digital exchange boundary map for submission to the FCC under the USF/ICC Order.

Finally, the biennial recertification requirement contained in the Study Area Boundary Order is intended to provide the FCC with confirmation that a state's study area boundaries remain accurate. There is also an annual requirement that provides states and/or ILECs an opportunity to notify the FCC of small, incremental changes that are less significant than those submitted as part of the biennial update process.

After discussion by the parties regarding the appropriate procedure to follow in future years to update and maintain accurate electronic telephone boundary exchange maps, the Commission will require all disputed study area boundary issues and all proposed digital boundary map changes to come before the Commission for approval.

### **ORDER**

1. The Commission accepts the digital telephone exchange boundary map as Minnesota's official telephone exchange boundary map.
2. The Commission approves the digital exchange boundary map for submission to the FCC.
3. All disputed study area boundary issues and all proposed digital boundary map changes shall be filed with the Commission for approval.
4. This Order shall become effective immediately.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Burl W. Haar  
Executive Secretary



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