

STATE OF MARYLAND

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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF
REGULATED RETAIL TELECOMMUNICATIONS
SERVICES IN MARYLAND

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PC 39

Issue Date: July 22, 2015

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT

To: All Interested Persons

The Public Service Commission of Maryland (“Commission”) hereby initiates Public Conference 39 (“PC 39”) to solicit comments to review whether and how a telephone company should be authorized to withdraw a regulated retail service in Maryland. During the 2015 legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly passed House Bill 472 entitled “Telephone Companies – Streamlined Regulatory Requirements.” On May 12, 2015, Governor Hogan signed the bill into law. The law, in part, requires the Commission to conduct a study on whether and how a telephone company should be authorized to withdraw a regulated retail service in Maryland. The law also requires the Commission report its findings to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee.

The Commission intends to ascertain whether regulated retail services should be allowed to be withdrawn and in what manner so that the Commission's required public interest determination on the regulation of telecommunications services is accomplished using the best available information as a baseline. Each interested person is directed to file written comments on the attached requests for information and/or any additional remarks by September 14, 2015. This Public Conference is **not** a contested proceeding, and the Commission will not issue an order at its conclusion. Rather, it is a forum for stakeholders to express views that will assist the Commission in preparing a report of its finding to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee on telephone companies withdraw of retail regulated services in Maryland.

An original and seventeen (17) copies, and an electronic copy, of all filings, identified as PC 39, shall be filed with the Commission and addressed to David J. Collins, Executive Secretary, Maryland Public Service Commission, William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 St. Paul Street, 16th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. Five of the copies shall be three-hole punched. Telephone companies are encouraged to use the Commission's "e-file" system that is available on the Commission's website, www.psc.state.md.us. Any questions regarding this Notice of Public Comment should be directed to Jennifer Ward in the Telecommunications, Gas, and Water Division at 410-767-8021.

By Direction of the Commission,

/s/ David J. Collins

David J. Collins
Executive Secretary

INFORMATION REQUESTS

Topics relating to whether and how a telephone company should be authorized to withdraw a regulated retail service in Maryland include:

1. Whether it is in the public interest to allow telephone companies to withdraw retail services – including basic local exchange services and, if so, in what manner (e.g., with Commission review, subject to certain metrics, etc.).
2. The existence and reliability of substitute services (e.g., wireless telecommunication services, Voice over Internet Protocol-based services, etc.).
3. The implications of potential copper-based service withdrawal on emergency services (i.e., 911 service), alarm systems, and health services (e.g., Lifeline health alert services, etc.).
4. Whether the withdrawal of regulated retail services should be allowed on a geographic-specific basis and the potential impacts on end-users.
5. The potential impact of regulated basic local service withdrawal on the affordability of telecommunications services for end-users.
6. Should a Carrier of Last Resort (“COLR”) requirement be maintained?