



# State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Committee of Consumer Services

To: Utah Public Service Commission  
From: Committee of Consumer Services  
Michele Beck, Director  
Eric Orton, Utility Analyst  
Copies To: Division of Public Utilities  
Constance White, Director  
Laura Scholl, Telecom Manager  
Date: June 22, 2007  
Subject: Docket No. 07-999-01 In the Matter of the Petition for (801) Area Code Overlay & Abrogation and Recision of 801 Area Code Split Order.

## 1 Background

On April 13, 2007 the Commission sent a Notice of Request for Comments on Use of Area Code Overlay or Area Code Split. Comments were due on 31 May, 2007. The "Carriers" (as defined by the Commission) and Division have petitioned for the use of an Overlay rather than a Split. Public comments sent to the Commission have been on both sides of the issue.

## 2 Committee Analysis

From the perspective of the small consumers, some of the benefits of choosing the overlay option include: everyone who currently has the 801 area code gets to keep it and only new phone activations need to deal directly with adapting to the new area code. The drawbacks associated with the overlay include the inability to clearly see, by geographic boundaries, which area code to dial and that everyone would immediately be required to use ten digit dialing.

From the perspective of the small consumers, some of the benefits of choosing a split include having easily recognizable boundaries for the area code number and the fact that about half the people would keep their current number and seven digit dialing. The drawbacks for a split include the fact that about half of the

people would have to change their number immediately. This would result in significant costs to those changing their existing numbers, particularly for small businesses that would need to change all printed material that contained its phone number. Further, this options results in potential future complications when the next split would occur (in approximately ten years) which would require finding a boundary other than the county line.

The Committee supports the Overlay option primarily because it appears to minimize increased costs to customers, especially small business costs of changing phone numbers. This seems to outweigh other considerations of the Split vs. Overlay. However, the Committee is also concerned of how Extension Area Service (EAS) and long distance (LD) will be affected once the new area code is in the place.

Regardless of which option is chosen, the current EAS and LD service should be preserved in order not to create new, additional charges for consumers who continue to pursue their same pattern of local telephone communication. The Committee urges the Commission to define long distance and extended area charges in such a way that consumers are not burdened with increased costs for making calls within their currently defined calling areas.

### 3 Recommendation

The Committee recommends that the Commission pursue the Overlay approach as the preferred method when implementing a new area code. This method, in the opinion of the Committee, is the least disruptive to the public as a whole. In addition, the Committee urges the Commission to ensure that the current EAS and LD capabilities be preserved so as to not cause increased financial hardship to consumers.