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Vice President, Regulatory Affairs
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MTS Allstream Inc.

6 March 2006

Ms. Diane Rhéaume
Secretary General
Canadian Radio-television and
    Telecommunications Commission
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0N2

Dear Ms. Rhéaume:

Subject: Commission Reference No: 8620-C12-200601288
           Telecom Public Notice CRTC 2006-3 – Regulatory issues related to the
           implementation of wireless number portability

1.   MTS Allstream Inc. (MTS Allstream) submits the following Reply Comments pursuant to the procedures established at paragraph 36 of *Regulatory issues related to the implementation of wireless number portability,* Telecom Public Notice CRTC 2006-3, 6 February 2006 (PN 2006-3).

2.   MTS Allstream is in receipt of Comments filed on 27 February 2006 by the following parties: Bell Canada on behalf of itself, Aliant Mobility, Aliant Telecom Inc., Bell Mobility, Télébec, Limited Partnership and Télébec Mobilité (collectively, Bell et al); the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association (CWTA); City of Calgary (Calgary); Primus Communications Canada Inc. (Primus); Rogers Cable Communications Inc. (RCI); Rogers Wireless Inc. (Rogers); Saskatchewan Telecommunications (SaskTel); TELUS Communications Inc. on behalf of itself and TELUS Mobility (TELUS); Virgin Mobile Canada (Virgin) and XiT Telecom Inc. (XiT). Failure on the part of MTS Allstream to address any comments or issues raised by any party in this proceeding should not be construed as agreement with or acceptance of such argument or issue where to do so would be contrary to MTS Allstream's interests.

3.   In PN 2006-3, the Commission invited comments on the following issues:

(a)   the trunking arrangements for the interchange of traffic between wireless carriers and local exchange carriers (LECs) in a portability environment;

(b)   the need for wireless carriers to have a central office (CO) code in every wireline exchange area where wireless service is available;

(c)   shared CO codes where the carrier of record is an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC);

(d)   the wireless services subject to number porting;

(e)   the criteria for denying a wireless porting request;

(f)   the applicability of ILEC winback rules for customers whose numbers are ported between wireless carriers and ILECs;

(g)   wireless carrier access to ILECs' operational support systems (OSS);

(h)   directory listing information for numbers ported between wireless carriers and LECs;

(i)   Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) customer information for numbers ported between wireless carriers and LECs; and

(j)   any other regulatory issues related to the implementation of wireless number portability (WNP).

4.   There appears to be substantial alignment amongst the parties on many of these issues. Where decisions as to the appropriate framework and rules are required, MTS Allstream submits that the Commission should be guided by the existing local interconnection regulatory rules wherever possible.

A.   **The trunking arrangements for the interchange of traffic between wireless carriers and LECs in a portability environment**

5.   With the exception of Rogers, all parties to the proceeding are agreed that the rules for aggregated exchanges and points of interconnection (POIs) established for local interconnection regions (LIRs) should be adopted for the interchange of traffic.[1]

6.   Rogers suggests that the Commission should use local calling areas (LCAs) for grouping exchanges, arguing that the use of LCAs would be consistent with approaches used in the U.S.

7.   The comparison Rogers is making is entirely inappropriate. In the U.S., "local access and transport areas" or LATAs as that term is used in the U.S., are not comparable to LCAs in Canada. In fact, all of Canada is regarded as a single LATA. In Canada, there are also cases of LCAs that overlap. In addition, LCAs are different in different ILEC areas and can vary across carriers, including wireless carriers. The use of LCAs would create inefficiencies over time since it would result in two different interconnection frameworks. MTS Allstream submits that the goal should be to simplify the regime and that having a single interconnection regime would certainly go a long way in this regard.

8.   MTS Allstream supports the majority of carriers and other wireless service providers (WSPs) that have endorsed the use of LIRs as the appropriate means for grouping exchanges for the interchange of traffic. LIRs are well defined, clearly understood, do not vary by carrier and are already in use by LECs. The adoption of different frameworks for different carriers would cause inefficiencies and confusion, which could result in delays in implementation, technical complexities and higher costs.

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[1]   The Commission established rules for aggregated exchanges and POIs based on LIRs in *Trunking arrangements for the interchange of traffic and the point of interconnection between local exchange carriers*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2004-46, 14 July 2004.

9.   Accordingly, MTS Allstream submits that LIRs are the appropriate grouping of
        exchanges for the interchange of traffic with WSPs in a portability environment and
        urges the Commission to accept this approach.

**B.   Need for wireless carriers to have a CO code in every wireline exchange area
        where wireless service is available**

10.   MTS Allstream acknowledges that there are two options for WSPs to obtain CO codes
        for the purpose of creating local routing numbers (LRNs) in LIRs the first option would
        require WSPs to use multiple LRNs, one for each exchange in a multiple exchange
        environment based on LIRs. The advantage of this method is that no changes are
        required to the existing Central Office Assignment Guidelines that are in use and
        required of LECs today. Generally there is broad alignment amongst the majority of
        parties providing comments on the use of the current Canadian Central Office Code
        (NXX) Assignment Guidelines in each ILEC exchange area where wireless service is
        provided.

11.   In contrast, a number of parties have proposed the possibility of utilizing one LRN per
        LIR. This second option would be to adopt the concept of a single LRN for each
        wireless service provider in each LIR for WNP. The technical feasibility of this approach
        has not yet been determined and a CISC Working Group would need to be charged with
        the evaluation of the feasibility of adopting this approach on an expedited basis if the
        Commission were to consider changes to existing CO code assignment guidelines. This
        would likely have an impact on the timeframe for the implementation of WNP.

12.   Should the Commission wish to consider altering the existing LRN guidelines,
        MTS Allstream is of the view that this matter should be immediately referred to a CISC.
        The Commission should direct the so mandated CISC working committee to provide a
        report on impacts of the approach and recommendations for implementation within 30
        days of this phase of the proceeding.

C.   Shared CO codes where the carrier of record is an ILEC

13.   All parties agree that bulk porting of shared CO codes is the appropriate way of addressing shared CO codes in a WNP environment. This approach would avoid fall-out and porting failures that would otherwise occur should the carrier of record in the Canadian Number Portability Administrations Centre Service Management System (NPAC SMS) and the Canadian Number Administrator (CNA) databases continue to be an ILEC. The area of disagreement amongst parties is on the timing of bulk porting. While some parties argue that bulk porting should take place all at once, prior to WNP implementation, other parties argue that bulk porting should only occur for those areas where LEC-to-LEC LNP currently exists, and after that take place, on an as required basis, as is the case under the current rules.

14.   MTS Allstream supports bulk porting only for existing portability areas and only when WNP is introduced to an area. Rogers on the other hand, proposes that all CO codes be ported regardless, even if the numbers are in areas where LEC-to-LEC LNP does not currently exist.

15.   Today, the only CO codes and wireline telephone numbers in the NPAC SMS database administered by the Canadian Local Number Portability Consortium (CLNPC) are those in LNP capable exchanges. There is no requirement or reason for all CO codes in all areas to be in the NPAC SMS databases where LNP does not exist. This would potentially be costly and would create administrative and technical inefficiencies while providing no discernable benefit.

16.   MTS Allstream notes that the feasibility of porting NXX codes in ranges less then a 10,000 block could be influenced as well by the feasibility of assigning a single LRN in each LIR region, as discussed above.

D.   Wireless services subject to number porting

17.   MTS Allstream notes that there is consensus amongst all wireless carriers that WNP
         should apply only to telephone numbers associated with 10 digit dialable two-way real-
         time voice communications, such as cellular, PCS and enhanced specialized mobile
         radio (ESMR), push to talk as well as post-paid and pre-paid services.

18.   MTS Allstream submits that the Commission should reject XiT's suggestion that a wider
         definition of services be adopted that includes all wireless services which make use of
         E.164 NANP telephone numbers interconnected to the PSTN. It would be difficult to
         include other services such as paging as no independent paging operators are named
         as parties or registered as interested parties to either this proceeding or, for that matter,
         the proceeding leading to *Implementation of wireless number portability*, Telecom
         Decision CRTC 2005-71, issued 20 December 2005, nor have these parties been
         directed to implement WNP.

**F.   The applicability of ILEC winback rules for customers whose numbers are ported
         between wireless carriers and ILECs**

19.   There are a number of diverging views as to whether and, if so, how and when the
         winback rules should apply in a WNP environment. Bell et al, TELUS, SaskTel and
         MTS Allstream are in agreement that there is no need for winback restrictions to apply to
         customers who port numbers from an ILEC to a wireless carrier and vice versa. Rogers,
         Primus, Virgin and XiT support the imposition of winback restrictions. Primus takes the
         position that winback restrictions should apply to wireless carriers that port a wireless
         number to a mobile virtual network operator (MVNO).

20.   While MTS Allstream does not support either TELUS' general argument for complete
         abandonment of the winback rules or the Bell et al position that the current winback rules
         violate the *Charter of Rights and Freedom*, MTS Allstream is of the view that these rules
         are not needed in the wireless services sector.

21.   There is no need for winback rules between ILECs and WSPs, or for that matter
        between WSPs. Parties seeking the extension of winback rules ignore the market
        considerations underlying the application of winback rules to the wireline local voice
        market. In a wireline market these rules are applied when a customer is transferred from
        a dominant wireline incumbent to a non-dominant wireline service provider. The market
        circumstances are completely different in the wireless market. Unlike the wireline
        market, there is no dominant carrier within a specific operating territory. Instead, this
        sector is highly competitive with well established providers each having a relatively equal
        share of the market. Under these circumstances there is no need to implement any
        winback restrictions and, therefore, MTS Allstream requests that the Commission reject
        those requests for winback rules to be extended to the wireless sector.

G.   Wireless carrier access to ILECs' OSS

22.   Rogers and XiT have proposed that access to OSSs should be extended to wireless
        carriers for purposes of WNP. Bell et al, and TELUS in turn argue that should OSS
        access to ILEC OSS be required for WNP, then reciprocal access to WSP's OSSs
        should also be mandated.

23.   TELUS suggests that all carriers, including CLECs, should be required to provide
        reciprocal access to their OSSs, if wireless access to ILEC's OSS is required.

24.   It is MTS Allstream's view that the vast majority of WNP porting will be wireless-to-
        wireless, with very low and little demand for intermodal porting. Furthermore, porting
        requests from wireless carriers will generally be simpler and would normally not be
        accompanied by a request for an access facility such as an unbundled loop. This will
        greatly simplify the process relative to wireline.

25.   MTS Allstream submits that the question of whether or not a wireless carriers' access to
        ILEC's OSS is warranted should be deferred until actual requests are received from a
        wireless carrier. This request would necessarily be accompanied by a forecast of the

volume of service requests for number ports and other information that may be required in order for the receiving carrier to respond. If there is a prima facie business case measured in terms of overall cost saving and increased efficiencies for both parties, it would be more appropriate to use the processes currently in existence for CLEC access to ILEC OSSs to determine the specific processes that such access would apply to and the implementation time frames, should circumstances warrant a request for OSS access.

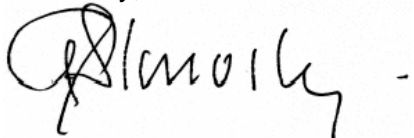**H.   Directory listing information for numbers ported between wireless carriers & LECs**

26.   All parties commenting on this subject, with the exception of XiT, are in agreement that the current directory listing practices and rules should continue to apply unchanged.[2] XiT suggests that WSPs should be required to participate in telephone directories and should be compensated for providing directory telephone numbers to ILECs.

27.   Under the current rules, a customer moving a number from a wireline to a wireless service provider has the option to continue to have a directory listing subject to existing tariff rates for an "extra listing". MTS Allstream submits that wireless carriers should continue to be responsible for the listing of their customer's telephone number if this is the desire of their customer, and should be free to decide whether or not they pass charges on to their customer. The current rules recognize the differences between wireline and wireless markets, particularly with respect to pricing and therefore leaves open the option for wireless customers to have their numbers remain unpublished. The fact is that this is more often than not the desire of the wireless customer. There is no need to change this process as a result of WNP.

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[2]   MTS Allstream agrees with Bell et al., the CWTA, TELUS, SaskTel and Rogers that the current directory listing practices and rules should continue to apply unchanged.

I. Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) customer information for numbers ported between wireless carriers and LECs

28. All parties commenting on this subject, with the exception of XiT, agree that there is no need to change existing practices or ILEC database update procedures for E9-1-1.

29. XiT suggests that WSPs should be required to participate in E9-1-1 in the same manner as VoIP service providers. The only reason provided by XiT is that this requirement would provide additional funds for Public Safety Answering Point (PSAPs) that want to upgrade equipment to become IP-enabled.

30. However, providing funds to PSAPs is not, nor should it be, the responsibility of telecom carriers. MTS Allstream submits that where a customer ports a LEC number to a wireless service provider, the customer's information should continue to be removed from the ALI database as is the current practice. Where a wireless customer has their number ported to a wireline LEC, the requirement that the receiving LEC collect accurate customer information and provide the customer record to the ILEC, consistent with current 9-1-1 interconnection agreements, should continue to apply.

Yours truly,

For Teresa Griffin-Muir
Vice President, Regulatory Affairs

cc: Interested Parties to PN 2006-3

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