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Verizon Pulls Petitions for Deregulation in Rhode Island, Virginia Beach
COMPTEL Calls for Reform of Forbearance Rules

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In the wake of Verizon’s last-minute withdrawal of two forbearance petitions that sought wholesale deregulation in Rhode Island and Virginia Beach, COMPTEL, the nation’s leading association representing competitive communications service providers, is again calling for a major overhaul of the rules governing forbearance filings made at the Federal Communications Commission. COMPTEL argues that the existing process is flawed and diverts critical resources from consumers and small businesses.

At issue are Verizon's petitions for the FCC to remove network unbundling requirements mandated by Congress in the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In late 2007, the FCC rejected six petitions that Verizon filed for deregulation for its service areas along the entire eastern seaboard. In addition to challenging that decision in federal court, Verizon subsequently filed two similar petitions for its service areas in Rhode Island and Virginia Beach. With the court’s decision still pending, Verizon pulled the two petitions late yesterday.

“Bringing broadband services to more Americans is a top priority for COMPTEL’s member companies,” said COMPTEL CEO Jerry James. “Fighting these forbearance petitions requires a tremendous amount of time and resources. The public interest would be far better served if these resources are used to further efforts to expand the availability and affordability of advanced communications services to consumers.” James added, “The rules of the road aren’t working, and we need action by both Congress and the FCC to correct this flawed process.”

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About COMPTEL

Based in Washington, D.C., COMPTEL is the leading industry association representing competitive communications service providers and their supplier partners. COMPTEL members are entrepreneurial companies driving technological innovation and creating economic growth through competitive voice, video, and data offerings and the development and deployment of next-generation, IP-based networks and services. COMPTEL advances its members’ interests through trade shows, networking, education, and policy advocacy before Congress, the Federal Communications Commission and the courts. COMPTEL works to ensure that competitive communications providers can continue to offer lower prices, better service, and greater innovation to consumers. For more information, visit www.comptel.org.