

## **Patrick-Murray Administration Approves Agreement with Verizon Involving Landline Repairs and New Monitoring Programs in Western Massachusetts**

Department of Telecommunications and Cable completes investigation of complaints from dozens of communities in region

BOSTON - February 10, 2011 - The Patrick-Murray Administration's Department of Telecommunications and Cable today approved a settlement agreement with Verizon that requires the company make significant improvements to its infrastructure and landline network in Western Massachusetts.

The agreement, which also calls for improved monitoring of service and infrastructure in the region, will improve the reliability and quality of local telephone service provided by Verizon in Western Massachusetts.

The settlement agreement resolves an investigation begun by the Department of Telecommunications and Cable examining service quality complaints made by citizens and municipalities throughout Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties.

The settlement agreement, signed by the Attorney General, Verizon, IBEW Local 2324, and the towns of Hancock, Egremont, and Leverett, requires Verizon Massachusetts to assess deficiencies of its wireline infrastructure and to perform related repair work in most rural communities in Western Massachusetts to improve landline telephone service quality.

"The Department is pleased that the agreement's terms address our key concern, that reliable and high-quality phone service should be available to consumers throughout the Commonwealth," said Commissioner Geoffrey Why. "This agreement ensures that Verizon will make the repairs necessary to improve service, and gives the Department additional tools to monitor service conditions in Western Massachusetts."

"This agreement provides consumers in Western Massachusetts with assurances that their Verizon phone service is going to improve and the company will maintain an acceptable level of service. We applaud the cooperation of Verizon in reaching this good result for Massachusetts consumers," said Barbara Anthony, the Undersecretary of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation. "Phone service is a fundamental utility that should be properly maintained and operated at a consistently high quality."

The settlement agreement requires Verizon Massachusetts to make the following improvements:

- Survey and complete ongoing repair work in 33 wire centers serving 65 municipalities;
- Improve the condition of its telephone network in 34 additional wire centers within 15 months;
- File quarterly reports to ensure a continued focus on maintaining and improving its

telephone network; and

- Provide more detail in the information in its service quality reporting, including specific reporting on the Western Massachusetts region.

The agreement subjects Verizon Massachusetts to additional reporting obligations and monitoring by the DTC and the Attorney General.

Verizon Massachusetts is an incumbent local exchange carrier in Massachusetts, with carrier of last resort responsibilities and therefore is required to provide reliable telephone service in most parts of the state, including Western Massachusetts.

The following is a list of the municipalities benefitting from the agreement:

Adams, Agawam, Alford, Amherst, Ashfield, Becket, Belchertown, Bernardston, Blandford, Brimfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Cheshire, Chester, Chesterfield, Chicopee, Clarksburg, Colrain, Conway, Cummington, Dalton, Deerfield, Easthampton, East Longmeadow, Egremont, Erving, Florida, Gill, Goshen, Granby, Granville, Great Barrington, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden, Hancock, Hardwick, Hatfield, Hawley, Heath, Hinsdale, Holland, Holyoke, Huntington, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Leverett, Leyden, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Middlefield, Monson, Montague, Monterey, Montgomery, Mount Washington, New Ashford, New Braintree, New Marlboro, New Salem, North Adams, Northampton, Northfield, Orange, Otis, Palmer, Pelham, Peru, Pittsfield, Plainfield, Richmond, Rowe, Russell, Sandisfield, Savoy, Sheffield, Shelburne, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Southwick, Springfield, Stockbridge, Sunderland, Tyringham, Tolland, Wales, Ware, Warren, Washington, Wendell, West Brookfield, Westfield, Westhampton, West Stockbridge, Whately, Wilbraham, Williamsburg, Williamstown, Windsor, and Worthington.

The Patrick-Murray Administration's Department of Telecommunications and Cable regulates the telecommunications and cable industries, promotes competition, and protects consumers' interests. The Department is part of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation, which can be found at its [website](#), [blog](#), and on Twitter [@Mass\\_Consumer](#).

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