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20554' and one paper copy of the filing to "Federal Communications Commission, Wireline Competition Bureau, Competition Policy Division, Washington, DC 20554." For notices filed using the Commission's ECFS, the date on which the filing is received by that system will be considered the official filing date. For notices filed via paper copy, the date on which the filing is received by the Secretary or the FCC Mailroom is considered the official filing date. All subsequent filings responsive to a notice shall refer to the ECFS docket number assigned to the notice.

[61 FR 47351, Sept. 6, 1996, as amended at 67 FR 13225, Mar. 21, 2002; 71 FR 65750, Nov. 9, 2006; 80 FR 1588, Jan. 13, 2015]

§ 51.331 Notice of network changes: Timing of notice.

(a) An incumbent LEC shall give public notice of planned changes at the make/buy point, as defined in paragraph (b) of this section, but at least 12 months before implementation, except as provided below:

(1) If the changes can be implemented within twelve months of the make/buy point, public notice must be given at the make/buy point, but at least six months before implementation.

(2) If the changes can be implemented within six months of the make/buy point, public notice may be given pursuant to the short term notice procedures provided in § 51.333.

(b) For purposes of this section, the *make/buy point* is the time at which an incumbent LEC decides to make for itself, or to procure from another entity, any product the design of which affects or relies on a new or changed network interface. If an incumbent LEC's planned changes do not require it to make or to procure a product, then the make/buy point is the point at which the incumbent LEC makes a definite decision to implement a network change.

(1) For purposes of this section, a *product* is any hardware or software for use in an incumbent LEC's network or in conjunction with its facilities that, when installed, could affect the compatibility of an interconnected service provider's network, facilities or services with an incumbent LEC's existing telephone network, facilities or serv-

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ices, or with any of an incumbent carrier's services or capabilities.

(2) For purposes of this section a *definite decision* is reached when an incumbent LEC determines that the change is warranted, establishes a timetable for anticipated implementation, and takes any action toward implementation of the change within its network.

(c) Competing service providers may object to incumbent LEC notice of retirement of copper loops or copper subloops and replacement with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops in the manner set forth in § 51.333(c).

[61 FR 47352, Sept. 6, 1996, as amended at 68 FR 52305, Sept. 2, 2003; 69 FR 77954, Dec. 29, 2004]

§ 51.333 Notice of network changes: Short term notice, objections thereto and objections to retirement of copper loops or copper subloops.

(a) *Certificate of service.* If an incumbent LEC wishes to provide less than six months notice of planned network changes, the public notice or certification that it files with the Commission must include a certificate of service in addition to the information required by § 51.327(a) or § 51.329(a)(2), as applicable. The certificate of service shall include:

(1) A statement that, at least five business days in advance of its filing with the Commission, the incumbent LEC served a copy of its public notice upon each telephone exchange service provider that directly interconnects with the incumbent LEC's network; and

(2) The name and address of each such telephone exchange service provider upon which the notice was served.

(b) *Implementation date.* The Commission will release a public notice of filings of such short term notices or notices of replacement of copper loops or copper subloops with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops. The effective date of the network changes referenced in those filings shall be subject to the following requirements:

(1) *Short term notice.* Short term notices shall be deemed final on the tenth business day after the release of the Commission's public notice, unless an

objection is filed pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section.

(2) *Replacement of copper loops or copper subloops with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops.* Notices of replacement of copper loops or copper subloops with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops shall be deemed approved on the 90th day after the release of the Commission's public notice of the filing, unless an objection is filed pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section. Incumbent LEC notice of intent to retire any copper loops or copper subloops and replace such loops or subloops with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops shall be subject to the short term notice provisions of this section, but under no circumstances may an incumbent LEC provide less than 90 days notice of such a change.

(c) *Objection procedures for short term notice and notices of replacement of copper loops or copper subloops with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops.* An objection to an incumbent LEC's short term notice or to its notice that it intends to retire copper loops or copper subloops and replace such loops or subloops with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops may be filed by an information service provider or telecommunications service provider that directly interconnects with the incumbent LEC's network. Such objections must be filed with the Commission, and served on the incumbent LEC, no later than the ninth business day following the release of the Commission's public notice. All objections filed under this section must:

(1) State specific reasons why the objector cannot accommodate the incumbent LEC's changes by the date stated in the incumbent LEC's public notice and must indicate any specific technical information or other assistance required that would enable the objector to accommodate those changes;

(2) List steps the objector is taking to accommodate the incumbent LEC's changes on an expedited basis;

(3) State the earliest possible date (not to exceed six months from the date the incumbent LEC gave its original public notice under this section) by which the objector anticipates that it can accommodate the incumbent LEC's

changes, assuming it receives the technical information or other assistance requested under paragraph (c)(1) of this section;

(4) Provide any other information relevant to the objection; and

(5) Provide the following affidavit, executed by the objector's president, chief executive officer, or other corporate officer or official, who has appropriate authority to bind the corporation, and knowledge of the details of the objector's inability to adjust its network on a timely basis:

"I, (*name and title*), under oath and subject to penalty for perjury, certify that I have read this objection, that the statements contained in it are true, that there is good ground to support the objection, and that it is not interposed for purposes of delay. I have appropriate authority to make this certification on behalf of (*objector*) and I agree to provide any information the Commission may request to allow the Commission to evaluate the truthfulness and validity of the statements contained in this objection."

(d) *Response to objections.* If an objection is filed, an incumbent LEC shall have until no later than the fourteenth business day following the release of the Commission's public notice to file with the Commission a response to the objection and to serve the response on all parties that filed objections. An incumbent LEC's response must:

(1) Provide information responsive to the allegations and concerns identified by the objectors;

(2) State whether the implementation date(s) proposed by the objector(s) are acceptable;

(3) Indicate any specific technical assistance that the incumbent LEC is willing to give to the objectors; and

(4) Provide any other relevant information.

(e) *Resolution.* If an objection is filed pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section, then the Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, will issue an order determining a reasonable public notice period, provided however, that if an incumbent LEC does not file a response within the time period allotted, or if the incumbent LEC's response accepts the latest implementation date stated by an objector, then the incumbent LEC's public notice shall be deemed amended to specify the implementation date requested by the objector,

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without further Commission action. An incumbent LEC must amend its public notice to reflect any change in the applicable implementation date pursuant to § 51.329(b).

(f) *Resolution of objections to replacement of copper loops or copper subloops with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops.* An objection to a notice that an incumbent LEC intends to retire any copper loops or copper subloops and replace such loops or subloops with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops shall be deemed denied 90 days after the date on which the Commission releases public notice of the incumbent LEC filing, unless the Commission rules otherwise within that time. Until the Commission has either ruled on an objection or the 90-day period for the Commission's consideration has expired, an incumbent LEC may not retire those copper loops or copper subloops at issue for replacement with fiber-to-the-home loops or fiber-to-the-curb loops.

[61 FR 47352, Sept. 6, 1996, as amended at 67 FR 13226, Mar. 21, 2002; 68 FR 52305, Sept. 2, 2003; 69 FR 77954; Dec. 29, 2004]

§ 51.335 Notice of network changes: Confidential or proprietary information.

(a) If an incumbent LEC claims that information otherwise required to be disclosed is confidential or proprietary, the incumbent LEC's public notice must include, in addition to the information identified in § 51.327(a), a statement that the incumbent LEC will make further information available to those signing a nondisclosure agreement.

(b) *Tolling the public notice period.* Upon receipt by an incumbent LEC of a competing service provider's request for disclosure of confidential or proprietary information, the applicable public notice period will be tolled until the parties agree on the terms of a nondisclosure agreement. An incumbent LEC receiving such a request must amend its public notice as follows:

(1) On the date it receives a request from a competing service provider for disclosure of confidential or proprietary information, to state that the notice period is tolled; and

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(2) On the date the nondisclosure agreement is finalized, to specify a new implementation date.

[61 FR 47352, Sept. 6, 1996]

Subpart E—Exemptions, Suspensions, and Modifications of Requirements of Section 251 of the Act

§ 51.401 State authority.

A state commission shall determine whether a telephone company is entitled, pursuant to section 251(f) of the Act, to exemption from, or suspension or modification of, the requirements of section 251 of the Act. Such determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis.

§ 51.403 Carriers eligible for suspension or modification under section 251(f)(2) of the Act.

A LEC is not eligible for a suspension or modification of the requirements of section 251(b) or section 251(c) of the Act pursuant to section 251(f)(2) of the Act if such LEC, at the holding company level, has two percent or more of the subscriber lines installed in the aggregate nationwide.

§ 51.405 Burden of proof.

(a) Upon receipt of a bona fide request for interconnection, services, or access to unbundled network elements, a rural telephone company must prove to the state commission that the rural telephone company should be entitled, pursuant to section 251(f)(1) of the Act, to continued exemption from the requirements of section 251(c) of the Act.

(b) A LEC with fewer than two percent of the nation's subscriber lines installed in the aggregate nationwide must prove to the state commission, pursuant to section 251(f)(2) of the Act, that it is entitled to a suspension or modification of the application of a requirement or requirements of section 251(b) or 251(c) of the Act.

(c) In order to justify continued exemption under section 251(f)(1) of the Act once a bona fide request has been made, an incumbent LEC must offer evidence that the application of the requirements of section 251(c) of the Act