COMMENTS OF COMCAST CORPORATION

Comcast Corporation ("Comcast") and its affiliates hereby submit these comments in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau’s request for comment on Telcordia Technologies, Inc.’s ("Telcordia") above-captioned petition. In the petition, Telcordia asks the Federal Communications Commission (the "Commission") to make a number of changes to the number portability management process, including the institution of competitive bidding for local number portability ("LNP") administration and the removal of the North American Portability Management, LLC (the "NAPM") from administration of the number portability contract. Telcordia’s petition raises several important policy concerns regarding the current regime for administering number portability databases that warrant thoughtful consideration. For the reasons discussed below, the Commission should initiate a rulemaking proceeding to implement a portion

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1 Wireline Competition Bureau Seeks Comment on Telcordia Petition to Reform or Strike Amendment 70, to Institute Competitive Bidding for Number Portability Administration, and to End the NAPM LLC’s Interim Role in Number Portability Administration Contract Management, WC Docket No. 09-109, Public Notice, DA 09-1762 (rel. Aug. 6, 2009).

2 Although Comcast is a member of the NAPM, the organization makes decisions on the basis of votes by the members. Accordingly, Comcast disagrees with some NAPM decisions and respectfully questions a number of these decisions herein.
of Telcordia's requests, and to consider other steps to update the LNP administrative regime that would make the system more competitive, transparent, and representative of the current industry landscape.

I. ARGUMENT

Although the current administrative system for the most part has worked quite well for more than a decade, the communications industry has undergone dramatic changes during that period – from an industry largely characterized by traditional circuit-switched voice providers to one where voice service is offered by an increasingly diverse array of entities using varying technologies. As the Commission has acknowledged in reducing the porting interval for simple number ports from four business days to one, the "telecommunications landscape has changed dramatically" in the last decade and porting regulations and procedures adopted on an interim basis years ago should be reviewed and updated as appropriate. Comcast urges the Commission similarly to undertake a review of the LNP administrative process to ensure that the benefits of competition are fully realized and that the roles of administrative bodies such as the NAPM are appropriately defined.

A. LNP administrative services should be offered on a competitive basis.

Comcast agrees with Telcordia that the LNP administrative regime should be based on a competitive paradigm. Since the initial adoption of number portability requirements, the Commission has embraced the concept of competitive provision of porting administrative services. In 1996, the Commission concluded that "it is in the

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public interest for the number portability databases to be administrated by one or more neutral third parties.\textsuperscript{4} The Commission specifically asked the North American Numbering Council ("NANC") for recommendations as to whether multiple administrators should be selected.\textsuperscript{5} The NANC stated in response that multiple database administrators would enable carriers "to obtain more favorable terms and conditions" and would provide a useful back-up should one administrator fail to or be unable to perform its obligations.\textsuperscript{6} Accordingly, NANC concluded that "the selection of two database administrators is consistent with the Commission's directive that the NANC recommend the most cost-effective number portability methods."\textsuperscript{7}

The Commission subsequently approved the selection of two administrators, Lockheed Martin IMS and Perot System, finding that "there are clear advantages to having at least two experienced number portability database administrators that can compete with and substitute for each other, thereby promoting cost-effectiveness and reliability in the provision of Number Portability Administration Center services."\textsuperscript{8}

Ultimately, however, NeuStar became the sole administrator by default after Perot


\textsuperscript{5} Id. ¶ 95.


\textsuperscript{7} Id.

\textsuperscript{8} Id. ¶ 38.
Systems was unable to begin operations on time. Consequently, the benefits of vendor diversity were never realized.

Despite the recognition of the benefits of having more than one LNP database administrator, NeuStar remains the only administrator over a decade later. The Commission, therefore, should undertake a comprehensive review of the existing monopoly-based system of providing LNP database services to carriers. Specifically, the Commission should explore ways to give voice providers a choice among LNP database management service providers and to ensure that all industry participants can access the NAPM's processes and procedures. This review, as Telcordia suggests, should include a careful assessment of the use of competitive bidding procedures to award contracts. Additionally, the Commission should examine the procedures that are used to select members of the NAPM to ensure that requirements such as the substantial annual cost of participating do not prevent the membership of the NAPM from reflecting the full diversity of the voice industry today.

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10 See generally *Petition of Telcordia Technologies, Inc. to Reform or Strike Amendment 70, to Institute Competitive Bidding for Number Portability Administration, and to End the NAPM LLC’s Interim Role in Number Portability Administration Contract Management,* WC Docket No. 07-149 (May 20, 2009) (“Telcordia Petition”). Comcast recognizes and supports NAPM’s recent effort to develop a request for proposal (“RFP”) for a next generation Number Portability Administration Center (“NPAC”) architecture based on a peering model. This effort is consistent with the competitive approach to LNP administration that Comcast favors because the architecture would use multiple NPAC databases provided by multiple vendors that will be fully synchronized and interoperable across each of the seven NPAC regions. Comcast, however, is concerned that the slow development of the RFP is unnecessarily delaying the delivery of the benefits of competition to voice providers. Comcast, therefore, urges the Commission to ensure that an RFP that is designed to produce a competitive regime for the LNP process is issued on a timely basis.
B. The Commission should ensure that the NAPM’s authority is appropriately limited to issues related to the porting of numbers for voice service.

As the years have progressed, the NAPM’s activities have expanded to include additional responsibilities beyond those directly related to the porting of numbers for voice services. In Comcast’s view, these actions have diverted the NAPM from its principal charter. The Commission, therefore, should reiterate that the NAPM’s jurisdiction extends only to issues relating to the porting of numbers for voice service.

The Commission originally designated the regional LLCs, which later joined together in the NAPM, to “manage and oversee” the local number portability database administrators on an interim basis pending the outcome of additional rulemaking proceedings on the matter.11 The Commission explicitly limited the role of the NAPM and required oversight by NANC, which in turn is subject to oversight by the Commission.12 The additional rulemaking proceedings that were intended to further outline the LNP administrative regime never commenced. Accordingly, over ten years later, NAPM remains an interim administrator.

Moreover, the NAPM’s recent announcement that three Uniform Resource Identifier (“URI”) fields should be added to the NPAC database may exceed its jurisdiction. The NANC, not the NAPM, is responsible for determining “what specific information is necessary” to route telephone calls to the appropriate provider.13 Further, the Commission has specified that the NPAC database should be “limited to the

11 47 C.F.R. § 52.26(b)(2).
12 See 47 C.F.R. §§ 52.12, et seq.
13 47 C.F.R. §52.25(f).
information necessary to route telephone calls to the appropriate service providers.”

The issue of the NAPM’s authority to authorize the NPAC database to store additional URI fields is particularly important, both because there has been no industry consensus that these fields are, in fact, necessary to route voice telephone calls to the called location and because the NAPM’s decision does not indicate that it considered the fact that the addition of the URI fields will increase the costs of operating the regional LNP databases.

The Commission, therefore, should examine whether decisions such as the designation of additional URI fields exceed the NAPM’s authority. As an initial step toward ensuring that all of the NAPM’s activities constitute assigned responsibilities, the Commission should reiterate that it is the NAPM’s duty to act in the best interests of the telecommunications industry at all times, including by taking actions necessary to minimize porting costs. The Commission should also revise the NAPM charter to provide the level of transparency needed to ensure that the NAPM’s jurisdiction is limited only to activities needed to make certain that the LNP administrative regime continues to permit seamless, efficient porting of telephone numbers from one voice provider to another.

14 First Report and Order, 11 FCC Rcd at 8403 ¶ 99; 47 C.F.R. § 52.25(f).

15 The NANC itself was unable to reach a consensus on whether additional fields were necessary. See Telcordia Petition at 15-16 (discussing the unresolved nature of the URI proposal among industry groups).
II. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Commission should adopt additional reforms to the local number porting administrative system, as described herein.

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Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that on this 8th day of September, 2009, true and correct copies of the foregoing Comments of Comcast Corporation were mailed by electronic mail to:

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