



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo asks PSC to postpone any decision changing 315 area code

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO July 15, 2015

| ISSUE: **TELECOMMUNICATIONS, CELL PHONES, LANDLINES**



UTICA – State Senator Joseph Griffo this week is calling upon the New York State Public Service Commission to postpone any decision to alter the existing 315 area code.

As the Public Service Commission (PSC) prepares to meet Thursday to discuss ways to increase the number of additional phone numbers available in the 315 area code region, Griffo has sent a letter to PSC Commissioner Audrey Zibelman asking the Commission to further explore other potential solutions before taking any action.

The North American Numbering Plan Administrator is currently estimating that the 315 area code will run out of assignable phone numbers in the 18-county region by early 2017. While Griffo's letter acknowledges that the PSC has taken steps in an attempt to develop a solution that minimizes disruption and inconvenience for residents and businesses, he is still concerned that the PSC is considering a report on potential options that has not been updated since 2008.

As current Chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Telecommunications, Griffo – whose district is currently served by the 315 area code – is asking the PSC to schedule a technical conference to further discuss whether any other number control measures or modern technology capabilities can offer solutions that are less burdensome than overlaying a new area code across the same 315 region or splitting the region into two separate area codes.

“Since 2007, I have consistently urged the PSC to thoroughly review all possible options to preserve the current 315 area code before taking any steps that could potentially inconvenience the lives of many residents in Central New York,” said Griffo, R-Rome. “The fact that the PSC is relying on a report of options that hasn't been updated since 2008 causes me to be concerned that the Commission may not be considering all of the most up-to-date solutions that could spare everyone a whole lot of confusion.”

Griffo also finds it hard to believe that the region truly is close to exhausting all of its available 315 phone numbers, particularly since the region has been experiencing more of a decline in population rather than significant growth.

Furthermore, the PSC has indicated that it has sought and received substantial input from the public on this matter. Griffo, however, is asking the PSC to disclose the method and manner in which public opinion was gathered, as well as the outcome of this comment

period.

“I am not convinced that there really is a need at this time to create the headache of an additional area code in a widespread region that has only known the 315 area code for decades,” Griffo said. “My district has a significant aging and rural population that in many cases still utilizes landlines, and they are the people who would be among those most affected by adding a new area code. Before any decisions are made, I want to be sure that the PSC isn’t rushing to a conclusion without first ruling out all other methods that might resolve this issue with the least amount of inconvenience.”

A copy of Senator Griffo’s letter to the Public Service Commission is included below:

July 14, 2015

Audrey Zibelman, Commissioner

New York State Public Service Commission

Empire State Plaza – Agency Building 3

Albany, N.Y. 12223-1350

RE: PSC Case 07-C-1486, 315 Area Code Relief

Dear Commissioner Zibelman:

It has come to my attention that the Proceeding, on Motion of the Commission, to “Investigate and Evaluate Options for Making Additional Central Office Codes Available in the 315 Area Code Region,” has been placed on the Commission Session Agenda for this Thursday, July 16.

As you know, the 315 area code relief issue has been the subject of a Commission proceeding for more than 10 years. As the current Chair of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, and as a representative of part of the region currently served by the 315 area code, I am writing to express my continued concern over the impact that a change in area code would have on Central New York, particularly for small businesses and rural residents.

The Commission has admirably taken proactive measures to increase the pool of available numbers over the years. However, the White Paper entitled “Area Code Relief For Central New York, A Description of Options” that was re-issued March 4 has not been updated by Department of Public Service (DPS) Staff since its initial issuance in 2008.

I am requesting a technical conference to explore whether number pooling, reclamations, number conservation, or other more aggressive number control measures, using more modern technology, can be implemented to provide area code relief for the 315 area code region, rather than a geographic split or overlay. The technical conference would also give DPS Staff an opportunity to evaluate the latest North American Numbering Administrator forecast, which has been updated frequently and currently projects that assignable central office codes will be exhausted by the first quarter of calendar year 2017.

In addition, I would encourage the Commission to share the results of the most recent solicitation of public opinion, which the March 4 Notice indicates was “extensive.” Please consider this letter a formal request to postpone any action or decisions with respect to making changes in the 315 area code region until after a technical conference on this issue is convened.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

Senator Joseph Griffo

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