

February 4, 2005

The Honorable Allan Arlow
Hearings Division
Public Utility Commission of Oregon
Attn: Filing Center
550 Capitol St NE #215
PO Box 2148
Salem OR 97308-2148

Re: AR 464

Dear Judge Arlow:

This letter constitutes the initial formal comments of Sprint in the above-referenced "Blue Pages" rulemaking in which two versions of Blue Pages rules are being considered: Mr. Jim Long's and the Staff version in the December 14, 2004, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

While Sprint favors the Staff version over Mr. Long's proposal, we remain unconvinced that any new rule is necessary. Sprint's directories, as well as the directories of all the other major telephone companies, have long contained special sections with easily found listings for government and social agencies as well as schools, etc. We have not heard from our customers that they are dissatisfied with the organization of these listings, nor have we heard from any government agencies that we are misrepresenting them as alleged in Mr. Long's petition. Surely if there were numerous errors, omissions, and inadequacies in our directories we would have heard from our customers and the agencies we list.

The survey conducted by *211Info* seems to bear out our point that finding an agency in the phone book is not a consumer issue. Of 535 callers to the new 211 service who were asked whether they had tried to find help in the phone book before calling 211 only a handful of the respondents indicated they could not find a specific agency listing in a phone book. The vast majority of users did not attempt to use the phone book but preferred to call 211, and many others indicated they were not sure which agency could help them. This is precisely the kind of assistance that 211 service is best equipped to handle, rather than a directory listing resource.

211 service, which already serves much of the Portland metro area and expects to be statewide within four years, will accomplish precisely what Mr. Long has been seeking—and will provide customers with information that is constantly updated. With 211 service, customers do not need to know the name of the agency for the help they are seeking, nor will they have to guess at the appropriate classification to obtain a listing; a customer can simply dial 211 and say, "Here is my problem. Please connect

me with the appropriate agency.” No amount of manpower or money can design printed pages in the telephone directory that will match such responsiveness.

In light of the 211 technology, Mr. Long’s proposed rule is excessively bureaucratic and would needlessly increase telephone company and government costs—costs that would ultimately be borne by telephone customers and tax payers. For instance, Mr. Long’s preferred Option A calls for the creation of an advisory group to manage the compilation of listings; maintaining and coordinating with such a group would be extremely labor intensive, either for the company or Commission staff. Mr. Long’s proposal would also add many pages to directories by requiring that listings include addresses, internet URLs, a privacy education box, etc.—at a cost exceeding \$10,000 per page.

One of Mr. Long’s primary objectives is to standardize the format for directory listings of government and human services agencies. However, the rule would not apply to CLECs nor to the independent publishers that are producing so many directories in Oregon today. In other words, it would apply only to the companies that are already doing a good job of providing this information in a convenient form. This puts the ILEC at a competitive cost disadvantage relative to its competitors—and would leave many directories without the “approved” format. The directory business has become very competitive since the 1970s when Mr. Long first began to champion standardized blue pages. In this competitive environment, it makes little sense to impose micro-management regulations on the font size, color of the borders, placement, etc. Directory publishers have every incentive to make their directories as inclusive and user-friendly as possible based on the preferences of their customer base.

Sprint also believes there are serious legal issues concerning whether the Commission could administer Mr. Long’s rule as proposed. As suggested by the memo from the Attorney General’s Office, certainly the first step would be for Mr. Long to get a clear mandate from the legislature.

Finally, Sprint questions the alleged public support behind Mr. Long’s proposed rule. Undoubtedly, over the last three decades dozens of public bodies and organizations have supported the general concept of “Community Blue Pages” at one time or another, including 211 representatives currently. It does not follow, however, that all these parties would favor a new rule that singles out ILECs with burdensome and highly detailed regulations, creates a new bureaucracy for administration and adds costs to the existing process.

While Staff’s proposed version of the rule is certainly less burdensome, we reiterate that we believe it is unnecessary. Sprint’s “blue pages,” for instance, are actually pink (human services) and blue (government). They are located in the middle of the book between the white and yellow pages rather than between the front information pages and the white pages. The Staff’s rule would allow the difference in color but would require Sprint to seek a waiver to leave the pages where our customers are accustomed to finding them. If the companies are already meeting the needs of the customers in providing accurate and well-organized community pages, there is no reason to tinker with the precise color, location, and other minutiae related to presentation of information pages. Additionally, as noted before, such a rule would *not* apply to most of the companies that produce telephone directories so it would create a

competitive cost disadvantage for regulated companies and would not result in standardization of blue pages.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please contact Glenn Harris at (541) 387-9290 or by e-mail at glenn.harris@mail.sprint.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Nancy L. Judy