



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Terrie Prosper, 415.703.1366, news@cpuc.ca.gov

PRESS RELEASE

Docket #: R.11-03-013

CPUC EXPANDS LIFELINE PROGRAM FOR CONSUMERS

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 27, 2016 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today gave customers more choices by expanding the types of companies that can offer the California LifeLine program.

California LifeLine provides discounted home phone and cell phone services to qualified households. The CPUC today allowed for fixed-Voice over Internet Providers (VoIP) that do not hold a permit to operate in California to become California LifeLine service providers and offer California LifeLine voice service to their customers. Customers of fixed-VoIP providers make voice calls from a fixed address using wireline technology and the provider manages the network.

“By adding fixed-VoIP services to the LifeLine Program, we are furthering our goal of achieving technological neutrality across platforms and providing more choices for consumers,” said CPUC President Michael Picker, the Commissioner assigned to the proceeding. “We also adopted service elements that will preserve essential consumer protections and ensure that minimum voice communication needs are met, regardless of income.”

Fixed-VoIP providers who chose to offer California LifeLine must comply with California LifeLine rules and must provide programmatic safeguards including providing California LifeLine throughout their service area; providing the rates and charges for the California LifeLine service; interfacing with customers before, during and after California LifeLine enrollment; complying with the California LifeLine Administrator’s process to determine customer eligibility; and complying with the CPUC’s complaint resolution processes.

Said Commissioner Catherine J.K. Sandoval, “Our decision offers low income California telecommunications consumers an important option for California LifeLine service while assuring compliance with program rules and CPUC oversight of California LifeLine providers. California LifeLine connects low income Californian’s to public safety resources, the economy, and the polity by providing voice services, and the option to include Internet access. We look forward to the innovative services VoIP LifeLine will provide.”

The proposal voted on is available at:

<http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M168/K981/168981093.PDF>.

For more information about the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

###