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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
LABOR RELATIONS  
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE  
TRANSPORTATION

August 26, 2010

James McNulty  
Secretary  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
Post Office Box 3265  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

P-2010-2155915

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to express my thoughts concerning Virgin Mobile's petition to be considered an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier for the Lifeline program. I understand the value of the Lifeline program and how it helps the many Americans who lack the access and means to basic telephone and communication services.

The current economy has forced more people to seek out Lifeline and the number of customers has exploded. Many companies have decided to join the Lifeline program as providers in response to the increase in demand. While I welcome competition and am excited about the prospect of Lifeline reaching more customers, it is critical to not lose sight of the original mission of the program while also expanding it.

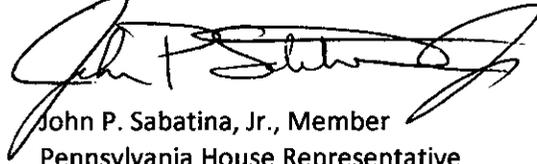
Virgin Mobile's Assurance Wireless program entered the Lifeline market in 2009. The Assurance Wireless program offers the most minutes at 200 per month. While the number of minutes is generous, unfortunately the rest of the Assurance program does not seem to be.

Virgin Mobile's plan charges additional, up-front fees for text messaging. Today, many cities rely on text messaging to stay in contact with residents for reports on storm warnings, street closings and government office hours just to name a few. By only allowing texting capabilities to those who can pay for it out-of-pocket, Virgin Mobile is not abiding by the spirit of the Lifeline program.

Virgin Mobile is also receiving a profit at the expense of customers and the Universal Service Fund. The Universal Service Fund funds the Lifeline program, and cell phone companies receive money for the minutes whether consumers use them or not. Virgin Mobile's Assurance program does not allow unused minutes from one month to rollover to the next, which means any unused minutes at the end of the month simply disappear. Lifeline customers should be able to use all of the minutes that the Universal Service Fund provides through the program.

As more and more corporations look to offer Lifeline phones, I believe it is important that the Public Utility Commission closely monitor the offerings of these companies to protect consumers from anyone looking to turn a profit on those who cannot afford it. For the sake those Pennsylvanian's who depend on this service, I ask you to remember the true essence of the Lifeline program and continue to preserve what makes this program so important to so many citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John P. Sabatina, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

John P. Sabatina, Jr., Member  
Pennsylvania House Representative  
174<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



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