

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Robert P. Morris	:	
	:	
v.	:	C-2024-3050358
	:	
Verizon North LLC	:	

CONTINUANCE ORDER

On July 1, 2024, Robert P. Morris (Mr. Morris or Complainant) filed a Formal Complaint against Verizon Pennsylvania, Inc. (Verizon) and the Metropolitan Edison Company (Met-Ed). The Formal Complaint was served on Verizon on July 29, 2024. In his Complaint, Mr. Morris indicates he is a Verizon landline service customer, but that he is not a customer of Met-Ed. Mr. Morris alleges service interruptions and failures with his landline service. Specifically, Mr. Morris indicates his Complaint involves the failures of Met-Ed to maintain and service electrical infrastructure servicing the Verizon “central office” and the greater Glen Rock, PA area. As relief, Mr. Morris seeks corrective action for both Verizon and Met-Ed to establish regular maintenance and infrastructure improvements.

On August 19, 2024, Verizon¹ filed an answer to Mr. Morris’s Complaint. Verizon averred that, upon visit by a service technician, Mr. Morris’s service was found to be working as expected. Verizon stated that the technician understood that Mr. Morris’s primary complaint is that when commercial power goes out to certain Verizon outside plant equipment, he loses telephone service. Verizon averred that the technician performed an inspection of the serving facilities, and the equipment at the Glen Rock central office is backed up by a generator. However, additional equipment at a remote terminal on Snyder Road also requires commercial power and is backed up with a string of batteries. Verizon stated that, as a result of the

¹ In its answer, Verizon averred that, although the Commission served and docketed the Formal Complaint against Verizon Pennsylvania LLC, Verizon North LLC serves the area where Mr. Morris lives. Verizon requested that the caption be amended to reflect Verizon North LLC as the respondent.

technician's inspection, a work order was submitted to replace two strings of NSB-170 batteries at the remote terminal to ensure that fresh batteries are in place to provide service during unexpected power outages. Verizon requested that the proceeding be referred to mediation to allow Verizon to contact Mr. Morris to explain the preventative measures taken to address his Complaint.

On August 22, 2024, the Commission issued an interim order setting resolution procedure.

On May 14, 2025, Verizon filed a certificate of satisfaction. On May 22, 2025, the Commission received a letter from Mr. Morris, stating that his Formal Complaint has not been resolved.

On June 25, 2025, the Commission issued a telephonic prehearing conference notice, setting a call-in telephonic prehearing conference for this matter for August 6, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

On June 26, 2025, I received an e-mail from counsel for Verizon, stating that Verizon would request that the August 6, 2025 prehearing conference be rescheduled because counsel for Verizon would be unavailable on that date. On June 27, 2025, I responded to counsel for Verizon by e-mail, indicating that a continuance request may be made by e-mail if Mr. Morris did not object to the request. On June 30, 2025, I received an e-mail from counsel for Verizon, stating that Mr. Morris is agreeable to moving the date of the prehearing conference. On July 1, 2025, I responded by e-mail to counsel for Verizon, stating that I would reschedule the prehearing conference to August 20, 2025. Also on July 1, 2025, the Commission issued a rescheduled telephonic prehearing conference notice, cancelling the call-in telephonic prehearing conference scheduled for August 6, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. and setting the rescheduled call-in telephonic prehearing conference for August 20, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. The purpose of this order is to memorialize the continuance of the August 6, 2025 prehearing conference.

Section 5.483 of the Commission's regulations provides presiding officers with the authority to regulate the course of proceedings. 52 Pa.Code § 5.483(a). Presiding officers are required to conduct fair and impartial hearings and maintain order. 52 Pa.Code § 5.485(a). Except as otherwise provided by statute, requests for continuance of hearings or for extension of time in which to perform an act required or allowed to be done at or within a specified time by this title or by order of the Commission or presiding officer, shall be by motion in writing, timely filed with the Commission, stating the facts on which the application rests. 52 Pa.Code § 1.15(b). Only for good cause shown will requests for continuance be considered. *Id.* The Commission has recognized the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's definition of good cause as "conduct which is reasonable under all the circumstances, thereby justifying the [c]laimant's actions." *Smart Meter Procurement and Installation*, Docket No. M-2009-2092655 (Order entered November 4, 2020); *In re Application of Penn Access Corporation and Digital Direct of Pittsburgh, Inc.*, 1992 Pa. PUC LEXIS 56 (Pa. P.U.C. 1992) (citing *Frumento v. Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Review*, 351 A.2d 631 (Pa. 1976)).

In this case, there is good cause for the continuance request to be granted and for the hearing scheduled for August 6, 2025 to be continued. Verizon has a scheduling conflict with holding the prehearing conference on August 6, 2025 and this is Verizon's first continuance request. Administrative agencies, such as the Commission, are required to provide due process to the parties appearing before them. *Schneider v. Pa. Pub. Util. Comm'n.*, 479 A.2d 10 (Pa. Cmwlth. 1984). Additionally, although Verizon's request for a continuance was not presented as a motion, the Commission's regulations are to be liberally construed to secure the just, speedy and inexpensive determination of every action or proceeding and the presiding officer may, at any stage, disregard an error or defect of procedure which does not affect the substantive rights of parties. 52 Pa.Code § 1.2(a). Since Mr. Morris does not object to Verizon's request for a continuance, I find it appropriate to disregard Verizon not filing its request for a continuance as a motion.

C-2024-3050358 - ROBERT P MORRIS v. VERIZON NORTH LLC

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