

**BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

Raymond G. Gehring	:	
	:	
v.	:	F-2024-3048169
	:	
Verizon Pennsylvania LLC	:	

**INTERIM ORDER
ON PROCESS FOR LATE-FILED EXHIBITS**

This order memorializes the procedural matters discussed at the evidentiary hearing held on October 15, 2025 and establishes deadlines for the parties to submit late-filed exhibits, objections to admission of late-filed exhibits, and replies to objections.

On or about March 12, 2024, Raymond G. Gehring (Complainant) filed a Formal Complaint (Complaint) with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission) against Verizon Pennsylvania LLC (Verizon or Company).¹ Mr. Gehring’s Complaint was served on Verizon on April 5, 2024. In the Complaint, Mr. Gehring alleges that Verizon disconnected his telephone service and applied fraudulent charges to his December 2023 and January 2024 bills. He also claims that Verizon should have applied the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) discount to his bills beginning with his October 2023 bill and, had that discount been applied, his service would not have been disconnected.

On April 25, 2024, Verizon filed an answer to the Complaint. Verizon denied that the ACP discount could have been applied to the Complainant’s account because the Complainant subscribed to basic local telephone service. Verizon states that the ACP provides a discount for internet service (only), and Mr. Gehring did not subscribe to Verizon internet

¹ The Complaint is a timely appeal from the determination of the Commission’s Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS), at BCS No. 3957029, which dismissed Complainant’s informal billing complaint but provided him a payment arrangement. A timely BCS appeal is subject to *de novo* review. 52 Pa. Code § 56.173(a).

service. The Company admits that Mr. Gehring's service was disconnected for nonpayment. Verizon asked the Commission to refer the matter to mediation to allow Verizon an opportunity to attempt to contact Mr. Gehring to address his billing questions.

On April 29, 2024, Chief Administrative Law Judge Charles E. Rainey, Jr. issued an Interim Order Setting Resolution Conference (Interim Order) referring this matter to mediation.

On May 23, 2024, the Complainant filed a reply to Verizon's answer. The Commission regulations do not allow for replies to answers. 52 Pa. Code § 5.1. Therefore, the reply to answer was not considered in this proceeding.

Mediation was not successful.

On October 2, 2024, the Commission issued an initial hearing notice setting a formal call-in telephonic hearing for this matter for November 6, 2024 and assigned Dennis J. Buckley as the presiding officer. On November 1, 2024, the Commission issued a notice rescheduling the hearing to be held in-person on November 20, 2024. On November 13, 2024, the Commission issued a notice rescheduling the in-person hearing for December 20, 2024. Most recently, on December 13, 2024, the Commission canceled the December 20, 2024 hearing.

This matter was reassigned to me as the presiding officer on April 3, 2025.²

Given the passage of time, I issued an Interim Order on April 14, 2025, in which I directed the parties to confer about possible settlement and provide a joint update to me by May 28, 2025. This was a roughly 45-day period, which recognized that mail or the equivalent may be the only available means of communication between the parties. I indicated that, if the parties were not able to resolve the matter, I would schedule a hearing.

² A judge change notice was formally issued dated April 23, 2025. The record does not reflect any other activity between the December 2024 hearing cancellation and the April 2025 reassignment notice.

On May 28, 2025, Verizon filed a Certificate of Satisfaction (Certificate), pursuant to 52 Pa. Code § 5.24(b).³ The Certificate provided notice that the Complaint would be withdrawn and the Commission's file closed, unless the Complainant filed an objection within 10 days of its filing.

On May 30, 2025, I received a status report from the Complainant, which was timely deposited in First-Class Mail on May 28, 2025. In the status report, the Complainant indicated that his Complaint had not been resolved, contrary to Verizon's understanding per the company's correspondence to Mr. Gehring dated April 22, 2025. The attached proof of service stated that the status report was also mailed to Verizon on May 28, 2025.

On June 16, 2025, the Complainant's Objection to Certificate of Satisfaction (Objection) was filed with the Commission. The stamped date of deposit in First-Class Mail was June 12, 2025.

As a technical matter, the Objection was not filed within 10 days of the Certificate of Satisfaction. Given the additional three days afforded by 52 Pa. Code § 1.56(b), which applies whenever a party is required to do an act within a prescribed period after service of a document upon the party and the document is served by First-Class Mail, the deadline for Complainant to file an Objection was June 9, 2025 (the first business day following the deadline of June 7, 2025). As noted, the date of deposit was June 12, 2025.

On July 15, 2025, I issued an interim order stating that I would disregard this procedural defect, pursuant to 52 Pa. Code § 1.2 (providing for the liberal construction of the rules, particularly where the litigant is self-represented), and deem the Objection as being timely-filed. The delay was minimal and, further, the Complainant had provided notice to Verizon in his status report that, as of May 28, 2025, he did not consider there to be a settlement. Thus, I did not find that mailing the Objection three days late adversely affected a substantive right of Verizon.

³ On the same date, Verizon filed a Corrected Certificate of Satisfaction. The only change was to correct the spelling of the Complainant's name.

Accordingly, as this matter remained unresolved, I directed that an evidentiary hearing would be scheduled. By interim order issued on July 15, 2025, I specified that the location for the hearing would be an available hearing room in the Commonwealth Keystone Building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in September 2025 and that the parties and any witnesses could participate in-person or by telephone. As stated in the interim order, the hybrid-format was intended to provide the greatest flexibility for participation by the parties and potential witnesses. To assist me in conducting the hearing most efficiently, I also directed the parties to notify me in writing at least 10 days prior to the scheduled hearing if they would participate by telephone.

Allowing time for that deadline, I issued a prehearing order on September 2, 2025, identifying that counsel for Verizon Pennsylvania LLC had notified me that their attorney and witnesses will participate in the evidentiary hearing by telephone. I also reiterated the information provided in the hearing notices regarding the various rules and procedures governing the evidentiary hearing. The prehearing order was served on Mr. Gehring by overnight mail and delivered on September 3, 2025.

Also on September 3, 2025, I received the Complainant's Motion for Continuance (Motion). Mr. Gehring requested a continuance of the September 9, 2025 hearing for 15 to 30 days. The Motion was dated September 2, 2025 and included a Proof of Service, stating that it was filed with the Commission and served to Verizon. In his Motion, the Complainant stated that he has not been able to reach and/or communicate with his potential witness. Mr. Gehring stated that, as of August 27, 2025, he was being assisted by an office aide/staff worker for a Pennsylvania state official to locate a caseworker with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services in its Reading, Pennsylvania call center – either a specific caseworker he last spoke to in November 2023 or, if unable to find that person, an alternate caseworker.

The Complainant's Motion did not indicate Verizon's position on the requested continuance. Given the limited time before the hearing, I contacted counsel for Verizon, who responded that Verizon does not oppose the hearing being continued.

On September 4, 2025, I issued an Interim Order granting the unopposed Motion for Continuance. I also specified that the rescheduled hearing would be held in Harrisburg and that, for the convenience of the parties, including the Complainant and his potential witness, all participants would have the option to appear by telephone. As I had done for the previously scheduled hearing, I directed the parties to notify me in writing at least 10 days prior to the rescheduled hearing if they would participate by telephone.

On September 4, 2025, notice was issued to reschedule the hybrid in-person and telephonic hearing for October 15, 2025.

The evidentiary hearing was convened, as scheduled, in Harrisburg on October 15, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Gehring attended in person, represented himself and testified on his own behalf. Mr. Gehring offered two exhibits, which were identified as Gehring Exhibits 1 and 2, and admitted into the record after consideration of Verizon's objection and position.

Verizon was represented by Suzan Paiva, Esquire. The Company presented the testimony of one witness, Whitney Phillips. Ms. Phillips sponsored 7 exhibits, which were identified as Verizon Exhibits 1 through 7, and admitted into the record after consideration of Mr. Gehring's objections.

In the interest of developing a complete evidentiary record, I directed Verizon to provide additional billing records for Mr. Gehring's account for September through November 2023 and any final bill or statement issued when the account was closed.

After Verizon's witness presented testimony and was cross-examined by the Complainant, Mr. Gehring asked to (1) submit additional exhibits and (2) submit testimony by a potential witness at a later date. I denied Mr. Gehring's request to provide additional witness testimony, as his prior request to continue the hearing was granted and no further continuance had been requested prior to the October 15, 2025 hearing.

Regarding the Complainant's request to provide additional exhibits, Mr. Gehring identified two letters dated May 22, 2024 and July 10, 2024, respectively, sent by Mr. Gehring to counsel for Verizon. I offered Verizon the option for Mr. Gehring to retake the stand to provide the information through additional testimony, subject to cross-examination, or for the letters to be submitted as additional late-filed exhibits with the opportunity for Verizon to object in writing. Verizon chose the second option. On October 16, 2025, I emailed Ms. Paiva a redacted copy of the Complainant's late-filed exhibits, which are marked as Gehring Late-Filed Exhibits 1 and 2.

Mr. Gehring also asked whether he could provide additional exhibits related to the applicability of the Affordable Connectivity Program discount to landline service, which he has sought from various offices and agencies. I granted this request, subject to the same procedures and established for the other late-filed exhibits. Additionally, as for all of the late-filed exhibits, I cautioned the parties that submission does not mean the exhibits will be accepted as evidence. I will render my determination on the admissibility of all late-filed exhibits in a subsequent interim order.

As set forth on the record of the October 15, 2025 hearing, the following procedure will apply for the late-filed exhibits:

As noted above, redacted versions of Gehring Late-Filed Exhibits 1 and 2 were provided to Verizon on October 16, 2025. If Verizon has any objection to those exhibits, its written objection(s) must be filed no later than **November 5, 2025** (20 days).⁴ If Mr. Gehring wants to reply to Verizon's objections, Mr. Gehring must file his reply no later than 20 days after the date that Verizon's objections are postmarked.

If Mr. Gehring submits any additional late-filed exhibits, they must be postmarked no later than **November 14, 2025** (30 days after the hearing). If Verizon has any objection to those exhibits, its written objection(s) must be filed no later than 20 days after the

⁴ As discussed during the hearing, Mr. Gehring should be served by First Class Mail for the remainder of this proceeding.

date that Mr. Gehring's additional late-filed exhibits are postmarked. If Mr. Gehring wants to reply to Verizon's objections, Mr. Gehring must file his reply no later than 20 days after the date that Verizon's objections are postmarked.

Verizon's late-filed exhibits must be emailed to me and mailed to Mr. Gehring, no later than **November 14, 2025** (30 days after the hearing). If Mr. Gehring has any objection to the late-filed exhibits, his written objection(s) must be filed no later than 20 days from the date that Verizon's exhibits are postmarked. Any reply by Verizon to Mr. Gehring's objections must be filed no later than 20 days after the date that Verizon's objections are postmarked.

A reminder to the parties. No late-filed exhibits should be filed with the Secretary. However, a letter stating that the late-exhibits were sent to me and mailed to the other party should be filed with the Secretary.

Matthew L. Homsher, Secretary
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Any objections and replies to objections should be filed with the Secretary, sent to me and mailed to the other parties.

After the time has expired for the submissions addressed above, I will prepare and issue a written order on the admission of late-filed exhibits.

ORDER

THEREFORE,

IT IS ORDERED:

1. That any objection by Verizon Pennsylvania LLC to Gehring Late-Filed Exhibits 1 and 2 must be filed no later than November 5, 2025.
2. That Complainant Raymond G. Gehring must mail any additional late-filed exhibits no later than November 14, 2025.
3. That Verizon Pennsylvania LLC's late-filed exhibits must be served no later than November 14, 2025.
4. That any other objections must be filed with the Secretary and served to the Presiding Officer and parties no later than 20 days after the late-filed exhibit was postmarked.
5. That any replies to objections must be filed with the Secretary and served to the Presiding Officer and parties no later than 20 days after the objection was postmarked.
6. That the record in this matter will remain open and be closed by future order.

Date: October 17, 2025

/s/
Erin L. Gannon
Administrative Law Judge

F-2024-3048169 - RAYMOND G GEHRING v. VERIZON PENNSYLVANIA LLC

RAYMOND G GEHRING

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[REDACTED]
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Served via first-class mail October 17, 2025

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Served via eService October 17, 2025

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