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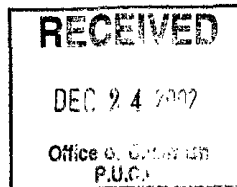
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PUCO

December 19, 2002



The Honorable Alan Schriber
Chairman, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Schriber:

A division of the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, the Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE) would like to take this opportunity to encourage the PUCO to rule promptly on SBC Ameritech Ohio's long distance application. As an inclusive and diverse voice for business in the eight-county Northeast Ohio region—COSE represents approximately 16,500 small businesses—we felt it important to be heard.

COSE members support competition in any marketplace. We strongly believe that open and effective competition should exist in both the local and long distance telecommunications markets. Understanding that this is a complex issue and one that requires the careful consideration of regulators, we applaud the PUCO for the diligence it has shown in this important debate. However, we urge the Commission to take action now in order to move forward and boost competition. Ohio should not remain in limbo. While we admit that we do not have the technical expertise to determine whether full compliance with Section 271 of the 1996 Telecommunications Act has been met, we encourage the PUCO to complete that analysis thoroughly and promptly.

If long distance entry is approved for Ameritech, we urge the Commission to remain vigilant in its oversight of the industry. Unintended consequences, such as an imbalance in SBC's market share or practices that make it difficult for emerging companies to remain competitive, would make true competition unlikely.

Thank you for your consideration of our views; we urge the Commission to move forward without delay.

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THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR GREATER CLEVELAND

Keith A. Ashmus
Chairman, COSE

Steve Millard
Executive Director, COSE

cc: Clarence D. Rogers
Commissioner - Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

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