



Public Utilities Commission

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August 13, 2019

Docketing Division
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street, 11th floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: In the Matter of the Commission's Initiation of a Complaint and Investigation Proceeding
Against Frontier North, Inc. and Potential Remedial Action.

Dear Docketing Division:

On July 1, 2010, a merger closed which, among other things, effectuated the transfer of ownership and control of Verizon North, Inc. to Frontier North, Inc. (Frontier), following Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (Commission) approval. See Case No. 09-454-TP-ACO (Merger Case). Following Frontier's failure to meet stipulated service quality conditions in the Merger Case for three consecutive years, the Commission directed its staff (Staff) to continue to monitor Frontier's service quality and to take appropriate action.

In following this directive, Staff previously issued a letter of probable noncompliance to Frontier on June 15, 2017 regarding Frontier's extended outage periods and failure to comply with the Commission's service quality standards. At this time, pursuant to the Commission's directive in the Merger Case and in accordance with its investigatory authority under R.C. 4927.19, Staff seeks the Commission's initiation of a complaint and investigation proceeding against Frontier in accordance with R.C. 4927.21(A), due to Frontier's failure to provide basic local exchange service (BLES) in an adequate manner, in violation of R.C. 4927 et seq. and rules adopted thereunder.

Specifically, between January 1, 2018 and July 31, 2019, Staff received 2,802 consumer contacts regarding Frontier. Through these consumer contacts, Staff discovered Frontier's frequent outages and failure to repair facilities within a reasonable period of time and, in some cases, for weeks at a time. Additionally, between July 11, 2019 and July 23, 2019, Staff conducted field inspections of Frontier's facilities pursuant to R.C. 4927.19. Upon review of these investigations and following receipt of responses from Frontier related to consumer contacts, Staff believes that Frontier failed to provide service, or failed to provide service in an adequate manner, in violation of R.C. 4927.08, 4927.11, and 4927.20 and Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-12 and 4901:1-6-31, as identified in 33 Call Center cases, summarized in Attachment A.

It is essential to promote and carry out the state policy of ensuring the availability of adequate BLES or voice service for public safety purposes. Without adequate, available, and reliable BLES service, the inability to contact first responders through 9-1-1 becomes a major statewide concern. Ensuring public safety requires that customers be able to contact not just 9-1-1, but other persons and entities such as doctors, hospitals, and pharmacists. Despite expansion of voice over internet protocol-enabled (VoIP) services throughout the state, many areas in the state, particularly rural areas, rely solely on BLES to communicate with family, friends, and emergency services.

Therefore, due to the egregious nature of Frontier's acts and practices, Staff recommends that the Commission initiate a complaint and investigation proceeding against Frontier in accordance with R.C. 4927.21(A), due to Frontier's inadequate provision of BLES, in violation of R.C. 4927 et seq. and rules adopted thereunder.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Fadley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Fadley" clearly distinguishable.

Robert Fadley
Director, Service Monitoring and Enforcement Department

SUMMARY OF BLES-RELATED PUCO CALL CENTER COMPLAINTS AGAINST FRONTIER

R.C. 4927.08, 4927.11, and 4927.20 and Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-12 and 4901:1-6-31 each require that specified telephone companies provide available, adequate, and reliable service to their customers.

Staff reviewed the 33 customer complaints detailed below between January 1, 2018 and July 31, 2019 with regard to service issues involving Frontier's provision of BLES. As detailed below, 25 complaints were confirmed by Frontier to reflect repair times in excess of 72 hours, while more complaints contained evidence from customers of Frontier's failure to repair BLES service within 72 hours after it was reported to Frontier, which amount to a 200 day violation duration of Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-12(C)(4).

Additionally, on July 31, 2019, Frontier responded to Staff-issued data requests with information regarding the date and time each matter was reported to Frontier, along with the dispatch start date and time to repair service. Frontier's failure to even dispatch for repairs within 24 hours evidenced Frontier's failure to make reasonable efforts to repair a BLES outage within 24 hours, excluding Sundays and legal holidays, after the outage had been reported to Frontier in 31 cases, which amount to a 210 day violation duration of Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-12(C)(3).

Finally, Staff determined that in all 33 complaints Frontier failed to provide available, adequate, and reliable service to its BLES customers on a reasonable basis, which amount to a 204 day violation duration for each of the following: R.C. 4927.08(A), R.C. 4927.11(A), Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-12(A), and Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-6-31; and a 410 day violation duration of R.C. 4927.20.

1. Call Center Case ID# 185166

On January 19, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone had no dial tone, but she was promised repairs from Frontier first by January 15, 2018, then Frontier committed to January 19, 2018 repairs, and now Frontier was delaying the repairs until January 22, 2019. On January 22, 2019, Frontier confirmed the customer has a BLES account and that Frontier received a report of no dial tone for this customer on January 11, 2018, which it repaired on January 12, 2018; then Frontier received a report of static on the line on January 13, 2018, which it cleared on January 15, 2018; then it received a report of static on January 19, 2018, which it cleared on January 21, 2018.

2. Call Center Case ID# 206755

On April 30, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone service goes in and out for the past several years, with the most recent outage occurring on April 29, 2018. On May 4, 2019, Frontier confirmed the customer has a BLES account and that Frontier received a report of intermittent service for this customer, which it cleared on April 13, 2018; no dial tone for this customer on April 21, 2018, which it repaired on April 24, 2018; and no dial tone for this customer on April 29, 2018, which it repaired on May 2, 2018.

3. Call Center Case ID# 208891

On May 9, 2018, Staff received a letter from a consumer stating that his phone lines related to two BLES accounts had been out of service since April 1, 2018. On May 29, 2018, Frontier confirmed that both lines were BLES accounts, wherein the first account had prior services issues reported on March 22, 2018 that Frontier repaired on April 7, 2018 and that both accounts reported service issues on May 16, 2018. Frontier stated that it completed cable pair repairs for both lines and restored service on May 18, 2018.

4. Call Center Case ID# 209389

On May 16, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone line had been out of service for eight to nine weeks and additionally that the service is unavailable whenever it rains. On May 21, 2018, Frontier provided Staff with a response that it received a report of issues on this BLES account on April 7, 2018 and repaired the service on April 9, 2018, additional issues on April 26, 2018 with repairs made the same day, further issues reported on May 4, 2018 that were cleared on May 7, 2018, and finally issues with no dial tone identified on May 14, 2018 with a remedy on May 17, 2018. The customer again contacted the PUCO Call Center on May 21, 2018 reporting that it rained on May 19, 2018 and the line had static and callers receive a busy signal. Additionally, the customer reported having no dial tone on May 23, 2018, which Frontier resolved on the same day.

5. Call Center Case ID# 214818

On June 22, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating that he has experienced service issues with Frontier for years and was recently promised repairs by Frontier no later than June 18, 2018, which were not provided. On June 29, 2018, Frontier confirmed this was a BLES account and stated that issues were identified on it on June 22, 2018 and cleared on June 28, 2018; additional issues occurred on June 16, 2018 wherein the line had no dial tone, which were cleared on June 20, 2018; issues with no dial tone on May 30, 2018 that Frontier cleared on May 31, 2018; and finally services issues relating to no dial tone were identified on May 24, 2018 and resolved on May 27, 2018.

6. Call Center Case ID# 218066

On July 17, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her siblings' telephone line had been out of service since July 6, 2018. On July 31, 2018, Frontier confirmed the repairs were made to this BLES account and service was restored on July 28, 2018.

7. Call Center Case ID# 218717

On July 23, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone line had been out of service for two days and was told it might be until August 11, 2018 before repairs would be made. Frontier confirmed that it received a report of no dial tone on this consumer's telephone line on July 19, 2018 and that service was restored on August 6, 2018.

8. Call Center Case ID# 219394

On July 26, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her mother's telephone line had been out on and off since December 2017 and that her mother and her

mother's neighbors had presently been without service for the past two weeks. Frontier confirmed this was a BLES account and that it had been notified of current issues on July 24, 2018 and contacted the customer on July 27, 2018 at which time it confirmed the service was working. Frontier also confirmed this line had previous repairs having been reported back to June 23, 2017, including subsequent issues reported on November 19, 2017 that were cleared on November 22, 2017; issues reported on December 5, 2017 that were cleared on December 7, 2017; issues reported on June 21, 2018 that were cleared on June 22, 2018; issues reported on July 2, 2018 that were reviewed on July 7, 2018 with no trouble found on Frontier's side of equipment; and issues reported on July 21, 2018 which Frontier cleared on July 23, 2018.

9. Call Center Case ID# 219971

On July 30, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone line was out of service on July 2, 2018 and when she called Frontier that day she was informed a repair would be made by July 24, 2018, which did not occur. The consumer stated she contacted Frontier on July 25, 2018 and was informed the service was cleared, which she states was untrue and she was given another repair date of August 16, 2018, which was unacceptable. Frontier stated it cleared the July 2, 2018 issue on July 4, 2018 but confirmed it received another report of no dial tone on this BLES account on July 25, 2018, which it repaired on August 4, 2018.

10. Call Center Case ID# 224348

On August 28, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone line had been out of service since August 25, 2018, came back on for one day and then went back out of service. The consumer states that Frontier stated the service wouldn't be repaired until September 4, 2018. On September 4, 2018, Frontier confirmed it received a report of no dial tone for this BLES account on August 23, 2018, which it repaired on August 30, 2018.

11. Call Center Case ID# 227098

On September 14, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating she was calling for her relative who has Frontier for his BLES service and that service had been out for over two weeks. On the same day, the PUCO Call Center contacted Frontier. Frontier subsequently reported the service was restored on September 19, 2018.

12. Call Center Case ID# 230852

On October 5, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating that she has been having repeated issues with service availability on her home telephone for the past two weeks with restored service only on October 5, 2018. On October 10, 2018, Frontier reported it received a report of static on the line from this BLES customer on October 1, 2018, which it cleared on October 9, 2018. Staff was unable to reach the consumer during its attempts on October 15, 2018 and October 16, 2018. On October 16, 2019, Staff contacted Frontier seeking information on any additional problems with the service on this customer's line since the latest repair on October 9, 2018. On October 19, 2019, the consumer again contacted the PUCO Call Center stating she has been without continuous phone service for 25 days and that service is faulty, particularly after six o'clock in the evening. Staff contacted Frontier, who stated it would complete repairs on October 24, 2019. On November 1, 2018, the consumer reported the

continuation of static on the line and her recent inability to contact emergency services when she was sick. On November 8, 2018, Frontier reported its completion of work on the service issue on November 8, 2019. On November 8, 2018, the consumer reported to Staff that service was restored.

13. Call Center Case ID# 231108

On October 9, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone line had been out of service since October 5, 2018. Frontier confirmed this was a BLES account and that the customer had reported noise on the line on October 5, 2018 and Frontier made repairs on October 11, 2018.

14. Call Center Case ID# 238495

On November 21, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her mother's phone line had been receiving inadequate service due to crackling and buzzing on the line in addition to its receipt of another party's call on the line since November 1, 2018. Frontier confirmed this was a BLES account and reported that it received contact from the consumer on November 9, 2018 regarding static on the line and repairs were made on November 23, 2018.

15. Call Center Case ID# 239714

On November 30, 2018, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone line had been out of service for about three weeks and that it typically takes Frontier seven days or more to make service repairs. On December 4, 2018, Frontier confirmed this BLES account had experienced issues on November 19, 2018, which Frontier resolved on November 25, 2018, with additional issues with intermittent dial tone on November 29, 2018, which Frontier resolved on December 4, 2018.

16. Call Center Case ID# 245603

On January 7, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone line had not had good working service since before Christmas and further, when a repair person came onsite, nothing was corrected. The consumer further stated that his son, who lived next door, was having the same issue. On January 8, 2019, Frontier confirmed this to be a BLES account for which it received a report of no dial tone on December 29, 2018, which Frontier corrected on January 3, 2019, but which faced additional service issues on January 4, 2019. On January 10, 2019, Frontier stated it corrected the January 3, 2019 service issue on January 9, 2019.

17. Call Center Case ID# 252108

On February 8, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone line had been out of service for the past two weeks and before that it had been out for a month. The consumer stated she contacted Frontier and was promised repairs no later than February 7, 2019, which did not occur. The consumer again contacted the PUCO Call Center on February 11, 2019 stating she still did not have BLES. On February 11, 2019, Frontier confirmed that it received a report of no dial tone for this BLES account on January 27, 2019 and would advise when repairs were completed. The consumer called the PUCO Call Center on February 15, 2019 stating that her phone was fixed and the case could be closed.

18. Call Center Case ID# 253330

On February 14, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone line had been out of service for a week and that he has had service issues since 1995, where service goes out for days at a time. On February 19, 2019, Frontier confirmed service was working on this BLES account as of February 14, 2019 and that a repair ticket for no dial tone had been opened on February 8, 2019. Additionally, Frontier stated that prior reports of service issues for the preceding 24 months included issues of service problems on: October 27, 2018 (repaired October 29, 2018); October 21, 2018 (repaired October 22, 2018); August 17, 2018 (repaired August 20, 2018); July 25, 2018 (with no issues found by Frontier); April 10, 2018 (repaired April 14, 2018); April 7, 2018 (repaired April 9, 2019); and February 19, 2018 (repaired February 20, 2018).

19. Call Center Case ID# 256118

On March 1, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone line had been out of service since February 8, 2019. Frontier confirmed that this BLES customer reported having no dial tone on February 14, 2019, which Frontier remedied on February 19, 2019, but a subsequent report was placed with repairs beginning on February 26, 2019 and March 1, 2019. Finally, Frontier stated that it spoke with the consumer on March 7, 2019 who then confirmed service was working properly.

20. Call Center Case ID# 256321

On March 1, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his parent's telephone line had been out of service since February 24, 2019. The consumer stated that Frontier was notified on February 25, 2019 but that they had not scheduled the line for reconnection until March 19, 2019. On March 11, 2019, Frontier confirmed this BLES account was repaired on March 5, 2019.

21. Call Center Case ID# 256737

On March 4, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone line had been out of service since January 20, 2019. The consumer stated that she contacted Frontier on February 7 or 8, 2019 who committed to making repairs no later than February 26, 2019. When repairs did not occur by February 26, 2019 the consumer states she contacted Frontier again and was informed the repairs would occur by March 19, 2019. Frontier provided Staff with its response that it was notified of the service issues regarding no dial tone on this BLES account on February 14, 2019 and that service was repaired on March 7, 2019.

22. Call Center Case ID# 259697

On March 19, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone line had been out of service since March 15, 2019, with intermittent service on March 14, 2019. The consumer also stated that this is the second time this year that telephone service had failed after a heavy rain and that the consumer could see broken terminal shells where rain and snow can reach the wires and access points. The consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center again on March 21, 2019 stating current service issues which had occurred three times in that same week and four times this year. On March 22, 2019, Frontier provided Staff with its response stating

that repairs were made on this BLES account on March 21, 2019 and that Frontier confirmed service was working with the customer on March 22, 2019.

23. Call Center Case ID# 263111

On April 8, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone line had been out of service for the past two weeks and that service goes out more in inclement weather. On April 9, 2019, Frontier reported that it was notified of no dial tone for this BLES account on March 27, 2019 and made repairs on April 4, 2019 and April 8, 2019, with service to the line returning on April 8, 2019.

24. Call Center Case ID# 265266

On April 18, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone line had been out of service for five days the prior week and went out again on April 17, 2019. On April 22, 2019, Frontier reported that it was notified of no dial tone for this BLES account on April 15, 2019, it made repairs on April 20, 2019, and confirmed with the customer on April 22, 2019 that service was restored.

25. Call Center Case ID# 265446

On April 19, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone line was again without service as of that morning and that Frontier stated service would be returned on April 30, 2019. The consumer also communicated that frequent outages that were "out of control." Frontier confirmed that this issue involved a BLES account for which it received a report of no dial tone on April 19, 2019, and for which Frontier provided repairs on April 22, 2019.

26. Call Center Case ID# 502023

On May 8, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone service had been out all spring and he had reported the issue to Frontier several weeks prior and the service had been in and out since then. On May 9, 2019, Frontier confirmed the customer has a BLES account for which Frontier would assign a repair ticket that day. Frontier also confirmed it had previously assigned a repair ticket for this account on January 24, 2019, but no trouble was found by Frontier on February 4, 2019. On May 15, 2019, Frontier stated it provided repairs that day, which it confirmed restored service with the customer.

27. Call Center Case ID # 505339

On May 17, 2019, a business customer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating its telephone service was out, which was costing the business money every minute. On May 24, 2019, Frontier confirmed that this customer was a BLES customer and that Frontier received a report of no dial tone on May 17, 2019, for which it completed work on May 20, 2019 when it found no trouble. Frontier also reported a prior report of no dial tone on April 30, 2019, for which it completed work on May 6, 2019 when it found no trouble. Finally, Frontier confirmed a prior report of no dial tone on September 14, 2018, for which it completed work on September 15, 2018 when it found no trouble. On July 15, 2019, the customer again contacted the PUCO

Call Center stating its telephone service was again out; on July 16, 2019, the customer confirmed the telephone service was working.

28. Call Center Case ID# 510555

On June 5, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone service was out and previously she had static for a week with such intensity that phone calls could not be heard. On June 7, 2019, Frontier confirmed that it received a complaint from this customer on May 29, 2019. On June 18, 2019, Frontier stated the customer's BLES was repaired on June 15, 2019 and the dial tone was restored.

29. Call Center Case ID# 512422

On June 10, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating that when her electric power went out on June 8, 2019, her telephone service from Frontier disappeared too, which has been an ongoing problem for years. On June 24, 2019, Frontier confirmed the customer has a BLES account and that Frontier received a report of no dial tone for this customer on June 10, 2019, but that service was restored the same day.

30. Call Center Case ID# 513857

On June 14, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone service had been out for the past three days, with much static and sometimes no dial tone. On June 14, 2019, Frontier confirmed that an issue regarding no dial tone had been received on this BLES account June 13, 2019. On June 18, 2019, Frontier stated it completed repairs on June 17, 2019 and confirmed restored service with the customer on June 18, 2019. Frontier also confirmed that previously, no dial tone had been reported for this customer on January 29, 2019, which Frontier repaired on February 14, 2019.

31. Call Center Case ID# 515348

On June 19, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone service had been out since May 2019 and that the phone line is laying across her driveway. On June 20, 2019, Frontier confirmed the customer has a BLES account and that Frontier had not received a call from the customer recently, but instead had previously received a report of no dial tone for this customer on May 30, 2019, which it closed on June 6, 2019 since Frontier found no issue to repair. On July 1, 2019, Frontier confirmed that on June 28, 2019, its technician found a cable "had been torn by a truck," so it rehung the cable "and service was restored."

32. Call Center Case ID# 517743

On June 26, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating his telephone service had been out since early the prior week. On July 3, 2019, Frontier confirmed the customer has a BLES account and that Frontier received a report of no dial tone for this customer on June 19, 2019, which it repaired on June 28, 2019.

33. Call Center Case ID# 518667

On June 28, 2019, a consumer contacted the PUCO Call Center stating her telephone service had been out for the past five days. On July 1, 2019, Frontier confirmed the customer has

a BLES account and that Frontier received a report of no dial tone for this customer on June 27, 2019, which it repaired on June 28, 2019 and confirmed working service with the customer on July 1, 2019. On July 31, 2019, in response to a Staff data request, Frontier also reported prior service issues for this BLES customer on January 24, 2019, which it repaired on January 30, 2019 and another report of issues on February 2, 2019, which it stated it repaired on February 6, 2019.

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Summary: Correspondence in the matter of the Commission's Initiation of a Complaint and Investigation Proceeding Against Frontier North, Inc. and Potential Remedial Action filed by PUCO Staff electronically filed by Docketing Staff on behalf of Docketing