

**Separate Statement
of
Commissioner James H. Quello**

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**Re: Billed Party Preference 0+ InterLATA Calls,
CC Docket No. 92-77**

The Commission is acting prudently by issuing a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in this proceeding regarding Billed Party Preference (BPP). I agree that a further notice of proposed rulemaking is needed principally because of the state of the record. I do not believe that the record is sufficiently complete, accurate, or current for the Commission to make a finding that BPP is in the public interest.

In particular, my concerns about the state of the record cause me to question the reliability of the cost data and the potential impact on the network. Even the most conservative financial data estimate that BPP will cost over one billion dollars to implement and millions more annually to maintain. It is unclear what effect this massive expenditure would have on the on-going deployment of the "intelligent network". Because the record does not suggest other uses for the BPP software, I am concerned that other more useful network upgrades could be delayed or not developed and deployed at all if we mandate BPP.

Before we mandate BPP, we must determine the extent of the "problem" that it is supposed to fix and whether there are less costly alternatives. Several parties have suggested that the TOCSIA framework of mandated unblocking, call branding, and signage, is working to address consumer complaints. Indeed, the FCC said so in our 1992 report to Congress. Additionally, the growth of dial-around services suggests that consumers are aware of and able to reach their carrier of choice. The record, however, is generally bereft of current information on user demand for and alternatives to BPP. In light of these factors, the Commission needs new evidence to assure itself that BPP is not an idea whose time has come -- and gone.

Although this proposal for BPP has been around since 1988, the record consists heavily of ex parte statements that reflect deep division and changing alliances among the affected parties. Indeed, the original proponent of BPP, Bell Atlantic, now strongly opposes it. Because BPP would result in a costly network reconfiguration that would affect every provider and increase the cost of every interLATA call, the Commission must base its decision on the most current hard data available.

Accordingly, I do not believe that we can make a public interest finding regarding Billed Party Preference at this time and on this record. So that we may receive more useful data, I support the issuance of this Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.