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TESTIMONY

INVESTIGATION INTO THE AVAILABILITY OF ADVANCED TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

(Attachments 1: Biographic Sheet)

TESTIMONY PSC CASE# 992

INVESTIGATION INTO THE AVAILABILITY OF ADVANCED TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

TESTIMONY OF ERIC D. WILLIAMS PRINCIPALLY IS CONCERNING HIGH SPEED INTERNET SERVICES IN TRADITIONALLY UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITIES OF WASHINGTON, DC.

Chairman Cartagena, Commissioners Meyers and Alexander;
Good evening,

My name is Eric Williams. I will also submit to you a copy of my bio and my complete testimony for the record of this hearing on the Investigation into the Availability of Advanced Telecommunications Services in the District of Columbia, Case No. 992.

While I am including my resume with this testimony I would like to give you some background on myself and my company Information Brokers, Inc. I have engaged in the integration, design and engineering of advanced computing systems and internetworking protocols professionally for the past 12 years also participating in the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). As chair of the Convergence sub-committee of the Open Systems Implementors Workshop sponsored by the National Institutes of Standards in Technology (NIST) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) I participated in the development of standards for telecommunications protocol convergence and implementation conformance at national and international levels.

In 1995 I developed a concept and later formed a company, Information Brokers, Inc. to address the areas of internetwork security and systems administration. A prominent facet of the mission of InfoBro.com is to aid the budding African-American internet communities by providing services and a concept incubator for entities such as Black Geeks Online (BlackGeeks.net) and CA-FAM, III (InterCHANGE.org), both non-profit organizations addressing the "digital divide."

Since that time I have participated in many forums to address and discuss issues of telecommunications deployment of advanced services and availability in traditionally under-served communities. Recently I spoke on issues of the "digital divide" at the conference of the Black Human Resources Network. I have participated in briefings with top White House advisors concerning the issues of the "digital divide" it's manifestations and impact on business and community. I recently returned from a trip to Kampala, Uganda to conduct a 5-day workshop for the Makerere University Faculties concerning internetwork management and enterprise infrastructure deployment.

This program is under the Leland Initiative a five-year, \$15 million U.S. government effort to extend full Internet connectivity to 20 or more African countries.

I have been contracted for the past 3 years in the capacity of internetwork policy and security expert for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In that capacity I have presented designs, policies and standards for operation of one of the governments most prominent network offerings - which includes the National Weather Service.

For several years I have been a resident of Ward 6c in Washington DC, the Fairlawn community. My residence and home based business are located with in approximately 2,000 feet of the closet Verizon (formerly Bell Atlantic) central office (CO). My reason for speaking at this hearing today is one of concern as a businessperson, parent, resident and community activist concerning information technology and advanced telecommunications service availability.

My current ISP, Capital Area Internet Service is operating as an ISP reseller for the company DEICA COMMUNICATIONS, INC. doing business in DC as COVAD COMMUNICATIONS. The services that are offered via that agreement include Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) services that are of the Asymmetric and Symmetric configurations. Some offerings are ISDN based Asymmetric or Symmetric configurations. With the establishment of those offerings, I immediately requested a quote for the SDSL service, which I deemed appropriate only to be told (based on, I suppose, a lack of a co-located POP) that the services were not available in my area, Anacostia. Dismayed but not discouraged, I decided that the local Telco common carrier (Bell Atlantic) must be in a position to offer the service out of their CO.

I have known that all BA CO's at least supported ISDN and must (my opinion) be prepared for the bandwidth of those digital technologies.

Once again I was rebuffed by the lack of availability of the InfoSpeed™ DSL service in my service location. At this point I started to smell a skunk in the works, as I researched the deployment of the services it appeared that the services of COVAD were available mostly in non-DC communities and traditionally better served communities of DC. This was not a complete surprise to me as I expected the co-location services were forth-coming from my discussions with my ISP. But at the time Bell Atlantic had no offering for me.

Since that time Verizon is now offering (and pursuing vigorously) *FREE* installation for ADSL services in my area and I assume many others in the DC-area. These offerings (including to ISPs as re-sellers) seem only for ADSL and would not support my business gains. Clearly the lack of availability not only impacts businesses such as mine, but impacts the entire community where these services are not offered.

Of concern fundamentally is the allocation of IP addressing for business use, ADSL primarily utilizes dynamically assigned addresses while SDSL typically uses statically assigned addresses. This is of particular importance when designing networks with identity and security concerns. While the use of Network Address Translation (NAT) can address these concerns in some circumstances it is limiting and often complex and should not be the driving factor for network design.

Additionally, offerings of T-1 and SMDS services by Verizon, while appropriate for my type of business, do not currently appeal to my sensibilities. I would not like to establish premises wiring which would require re-provisioning when I graduate from the home office for those services I wish to offer via SDSL and which is also more costly than the COVAD offering.

Businesses who may wish to offer training services or other community access venues are stifled in their ability to deploy robust hosting and information provision services.

This type of seemingly blatant disregard for servicing of agreements with CLECs such as COVAD seems to be driven, in my opinion, by the Verizon desire to recoup losses it may have incurred from ISDN deployment (also offered primarily in the asymmetric configuration) in the 90s.

Access to internetwork technologies and communications advances are key to the development of any community. Think of a community that only benefits from the use of the telegraph as opposed to the telephone or radio and not television. Each of these technologies offers it's own presentation of information and each progressed from exclusivity to ubiquity. This too is true of Internet and its importance in this a huge evolutionary advance in the information age.

Proper deployment of technology and competition in the new economy drives the change that we have come to know is rapid. These, to me are deficiencies in the Verizon service offering. Where a competing offering would satisfy my requirements and remove the limitations that drive primarily the 'consumerism' and stifles the engagement of Business-to-business services and locally based Consumer-to-business services deployment. The potential benefits to businesses such as my own and others in the community are being limited to 'consumer only' flavored options. No matter how it is presented ADSL technology does not satisfy the entire potential customer base. The rapid and fair solution to this difficulty appears obvious to me and clearly I have other concerns about the deployment of these technologies. I am willing if time permits to discuss any of these issues with the commission. Thank you for your time and service.

Eric Dana Williams
President/CEO
Information Brokers, Inc.