

States Urge FCC to Address Cramming for Consumers of All Voice, Broadband Services

WASHINGTON—The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners issued the following statements after the Federal Communications Commission approved new “cramming” rules for wireline telephone companies:

“The Federal Communications Commission’s decision is an important development addressing longstanding cramming concerns. State utility regulators, attorneys general, and consumer advocates have long urged the agency to take strong action against the cramming practices that are prevalent throughout the telecommunications industry. This is an ongoing problem with a significant impact on consumers, one that we’ve most likely understated.

While we are still reviewing the order, we believe the FCC has appropriate legal authority to impose cramming prevention rules on voice and broadband service providers, from wireline to wireless and new IP-enabled services. Unfortunately, today’s rule only addresses wired telephone service, this despite more and more consumers relying solely on cellular and IP-enabled phones. As the marketplace transition away from traditional land-line phones, the FCC must ensure that consumers of all of these services are protected. “

--NARUC President David Wright of South Carolina

“Cramming remains one of the biggest consumer complaints about their telephone services, from landlines to their smart phones. Today’s decision will help traditional wired consumers by preventing cramming practices, which is good news. But this action only gets us part of the way there. Cellular and VoIP consumers are also victims of unauthorized, third-party provider charges. We urge the FCC to take the next logical step and apply these rules to wireless and VoIP services.”

--NARUC Telecommunications Chair John Burke of Vermont and Consumer Affairs Chair Betsy Wergin of Minnesota

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NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of State public utility commissions before the three branches of the Federal government.

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