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PRE-FILED DIRECT TESTIMONY
OF
MAC V. HORTON
BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
ON BEHALF OF
CHARLOTTE COUNTY, a political subdivision of the
STATE OF FLORIDA
DOCKET NO. 990223-TL

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE

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FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

1 **Q. Please state your name and your business address for the record.**

2 A. Mac V. Horton, Charlotte County Government, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte,
3 Florida.

4 **Q. What is your position with Charlotte County Government?**

5 A. I am currently serving as Chair of the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners.

6 **Q. How long have you been a member of the Charlotte County Board of County
7 Commissioners?**

8 A. I was elected to a four-year term on the Board as the Commissioner from District 3 in
9 November 1996. District 3 includes that portion of the Englewood community which is
10 located in Charlotte County.

11 **Q. Docket No. 990223-TL is before the Florida Public Service Commission to review the
12 proposed numbering plan relief for area code 941. The 941 NPA Exhaust
13 Recommended Relief Plan recommends splitting the existing 941 area code into two
14 sectors, with the South Sector acquiring a new area code. The North Sector (which
15 would retain the 941 area code) would include Polk, Manatee, and Sarasota Counties,
16 including the communities of Bartow, Bradenton, Haines City, Lake Wales, Lakeland,
17 Palmetto, Venice and Winter Haven. The South Sector (which would receive a new
18 area code) would include Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, and Okeechobee counties,
19 including the communities of Arcadia, Avon Park, Bonita Springs, Cape Coral, Fort
20 Myers, Naples, North Naples, North Fort Myers, Okeechobee, Port Charlotte and
21 Sebring. According to the Relief Plan, the revised 941 area code service area is forecast
22 to exhaust in about 5.2 years. The new area code service area (including Charlotte
23 County) would exhaust in about 5.9 years. As Chairman of Charlotte County's Board
24 of County Commissioners, do you have any concerns about the proposed numbering
25 plan relief for area code 941?**

26 A. Yes. My primary concern regarding the proposed boundary line split is the impact that two
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1 different area codes will have on Charlotte County. As the commissioner for district 3, which
2 includes Englewood, I am also very concerned about the impact of the proposed boundary
3 line on the Englewood community, which is uniquely located in both Charlotte and Sarasota
4 Counties. But that issue is the subject of Docket No. 990184 and I reserve my comment on
5 that issue for the Englewood docket.

6 Charlotte County's area code was changed from 813 to 941 just three years ago, in 1996.
7 While I understand the need to split area code service areas because of the exhaustion of
8 available numbers, the expense and confusion which result from an area code change are
9 tremendous. And the impact is magnified when those changes occur so often. There is a
10 significant impact on government emergency management services, which will be addressed
11 in more detail by Wayne Sallade, the County's Director of Emergency Management. There
12 is also a significant impact on continued economic development in the County. It is extremely
13 expensive and time-consuming for small businesses, such as those that predominate in
14 Charlotte County, to make the necessary changes to communications and advertising
15 materials, as well as technical equipment. Mr. Bill Wishard, president of the Charlotte County
16 Chamber of Commerce, will address these matters in more detail. Only two years ago
17 Charlotte County created a Tourist Development Council and hired a Tourist Development
18 Director, who has created a major tourism advertising campaign for Charlotte County all
19 over the world. Finally, a significant percentage of Charlotte County citizens are senior
20 citizens who find frequent changes of this kind extremely confusing and unsettling.

21 **Q. If the Commission were to consider alternatives to the proposed North/South split,**
22 **would you have any recommendation?**

23 **A.** Yes. Although the number of new telephone numbers may require a split in the 941 area code
24 service area, an alternative should be chosen that allows for a longer exhaust period than the
25 projected 5.9 years. This is particularly true in light of the fact that Charlotte County just had
26 its area code changed three years ago, in 1996. It would be much more cost efficient if the
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1 941 area code were now split into more than just two sectors. An area code change has a
2 tremendous negative financial impact on government offices and commercial businesses.

3 **Q. As Chairman of the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners, would you be**
4 **in favor of an overlay method of relief in Charlotte County as a means of achieving an**
5 **extended exhaust period?**

6 A. Only as an alternative to the use of smaller initial service areas to accommodate more growth.
7 An overlay system would be confusing to Charlotte County's high percentage of elderly
8 citizens. But if more frequent area code changes are inevitable, I think it would be better to
9 go to an overlay system now.

10 **Q. Does this conclude your direct testimony?**

11 A. Yes, it does.

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