



MANATEE COUNTY

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February 6, 2001

State of Florida Public Service Commission
Capital Circle Office Center
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850,

ORIGINAL

Re: Request for Review of Proposed Numbering Plan Relief for the 941 Area Code
Docket No. 000604-TL
CAO No. 1302

Dear Mr. Fordham,

Enclosed please find the required 15 copies of Manatee County's Pre-Filed Testimony of Joe McClash, which were inadvertently not enclosed with our original documents. The original has already been filed with the Public Service Commission.

Sincerely yours,

James A. Minix
James A. Minix

DOCUMENT NUMBER - DATE
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BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In Re: Request for Review of Proposed
Numbering Plan Relief for the 941
Area Code

Docket No. 000604-TL

PRE-FILED TESTIMONY
OF JOE McCLASH

- 1 Q. **Please state your name and your business address for the record.**
- 2 A. Joe McClash, Manatee County Government, 1112 Manatee Avenue West,
3 Bradenton, FL 34205.
- 4 Q. **What is your position with Manatee County Government?**
- 5 A. I am currently serving as Chair of the Manatee County Board of County
6 Commissioners.
- 7 Q. **How long have you been a member of the Manatee County Board of County**
8 **Commissioners?**
- 9 A. I have been a Manatee County Commissioner, elected at large, since 1990.
- 10 Q. **This Docket No. 000604-TL is before the Public Service Commission to**
11 **consider which portion of the current 941 Area Code service area should**
12 **retain the 941 designation in light of the imminent area code split, or whether**
13 **a new overlay designation should be used within the current 941 Area Code.**
14 **The 941 NPA April 2000 Exhaust Recommended Relief Plan's primary**
15 **recommendation is that an overlay plan be implemented throughout the**
16 **current area code region. The secondary recommendation is that the current**

1 **area code service area be split into two new area code service areas. One of**
2 **those splits (Alternative No. 4) would occur between Charlotte and Lee**
3 **Counties. According to the Relief Plan, the exhaust period for the initial**
4 **941 Area Code service is forecast to be 8 years for an overlay plan and 7**
5 **years for a split plan with Manatee, Sarasota and Charlotte Counties on one**
6 **area code service area. As County Commissioner, do you have any concerns**
7 **about this proposed split and the forecast exhaust period?**

8 A. Yes. Regarding the proposed boundary lines for the split, I agree that this is the
9 most reasonable plan put forth by the industry. The Board of County
10 Commissioners of Manatee County has endorsed the split with Manatee, Sarasota,
11 and Charlotte counties remaining in the newly reconfigured 941 Area Code
12 Service Area. With respect to the proposed overlay plan relief for the 941 Area
13 Code, I have two major concerns: First, it has only been about a year since the
14 941 area code was split into two area codes: 941 and 863. While I understand the
15 need to split area code service areas because of the exhaustion of available
16 numbers, the Public Service Commission and NANPA should be cognizant of the
17 expense and confusion which result from an area code change. The impact is
18 magnified when those changes occur with such frequency. Specifically, there is a
19 significant impact on the governmental emergency services with respect to
20 telephone alert systems. There is also a significant impact on continued economic
21 development in the County. It is extremely expensive and time consuming for
22 small businesses, such as those that predominate in Manatee County, to effectuate

1 the changes necessary for an area code change. Second, Manatee County has a
2 large tourist industry which depends in large part on printed advertisements which
3 are disseminated all over the world. A change in the area code has the very real
4 potential of negatively impacting those businesses by having to incur the expense
5 to reprint and re-distribute these materials, not to mention missed bookings due to
6 a failure to have the right telephone number.

7 **Q. How would an area code change affect small businesses in Manatee County?**

8 A. Manatee County is home to approximately 5,600 business. The vast majority are
9 small businesses under five employees. In 1998, the Bradenton-Sarasota
10 metropolitan area was classified by *PC World* and *Money* magazines as being the
11 second best place of second tier cities to operate a home-based business. Small
12 businesses are more greatly impacted, both from an operational and financial
13 perspective, by unanticipated changes such as a new area code. Not only
14 purchasing new stationery, business cards, etc, but the loss of business due to
15 confusion and downtime from a smaller company's perspective has a greater
16 chance of impacting their bottom-line, collectively.

17 Word of mouth and effective communication systems are two of the most
18 appropriate ways to provide a productive sales and customer service effort. The
19 local Chamber of Commerce has projected improved customized communications
20 such as e-mail, chat boxes, interactive communications as the key to providing the
21 services demanded by small businesses. Splitting Manatee, Sarasota, and
22 Charlotte Counties or requiring an overlay plan would impact more than 720,000

1 people in contiguous counties. The projected population growth in this area by
2 the year 2010 would be almost 125,000 people or a total population of nearly
3 850,000.

4 **A. How would this change affect the overall economic climate of Manatee**
5 **County?**

6 Manatee County has a strong industrial base, it shares an international airport with
7 Sarasota County and is home to the largest containerized port in the west coast of
8 Florida. Port Manatee is also the closest, deep water seaport to Mexico.
9 Internationally, area code changes will have an unsettling negative impact on our
10 foreign business partners, not to mention our growing international tourism
11 business.

12 Finally, demographically, a significant percentage of Manatee County
13 citizens are senior citizens who find frequent changes of this kind extremely
14 confusing and unsettling, particularly the need to dial ten digits to make a local
15 call. We therefore oppose the recommendation to implement a ten digit overlay
16 plan.

17 **Q. If the Commission were to consider alternatives to the proposed overlay plan,**
18 **would you have any recommendation?**

19 **A.** Yes. First and foremost Manatee County should remain in the 941 Area Code.
20 My principal concern with respect to an area code change is the negative financial
21 impact it has on government offices and commercial businesses. Second, while
22 area code changes are inevitable, the impact would be considerably lessened if the

1 new service areas could be smaller so as to lengthen the exhaust period. And,
2 third, limiting cellular phone and paging companies to much smaller blocks of
3 reserved numbers, or providing separate area codes for such companies, may
4 lengthen the exhaust period in all areas.

5 **Q. Would you be in favor of an overlay method of relief in Manatee County as a**
6 **means of getting an extended exhaust period?**

7 A. No, I would not. As I indicated earlier, in my view, the overlay method is not in
8 the best interests of the citizens of Manatee County. Nor is it that much longer.
9 The projected exhaust time for the proposed change is 8 years with an overlay
10 plan, and 7 years with the proposed split plan. In other words, the split plan is
11 almost the same exhaust plan as an overlay plan. Under these circumstances,
12 there is no need for an overlay plan if the exhaust period for a split plan is just
13 about the same. A one year extension of the exhaust period is not a sufficient
14 benefit to give up a service area with just one area code. It would also result in a
15 confusing hodge podge of numbers without any apparent geographical
16 boundaries. As I previously stated, the best alternative is a smaller service area so
17 as to accommodate more growth. We therefore strongly support Alternative
18 Number 4.

19 **Q. Does this conclude your testimony?**

20 A. Yes, it does.

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