

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Combatting Illegal Robocalls Through FCC Numbering Policies)	WC Docket No. 26-49
)	
Implementation of TRACED Act Section 6(a) — Knowledge of Customers by Entities with Access to Numbering Resources)	WC Docket No. 20-67
)	
Numbering Policies for Modern Communications)	WC Docket No. 13-97
)	
Telephone Number Requirements for IP- Enabled Service Providers)	WC Docket No. 07-243

**INITIAL COMMENTS OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGULATORY UTILITY COMMISSIONERS**

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) respectfully submits these comments in response to the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) March 27, 2026, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (*NPRM*) in the above-captioned proceedings.¹

The FCC initiated “. . . this proceeding to evaluate whether [the Commission] should adopt changes to our telephone numbering policies, particularly in how assigned numbers are used by service providers, to further combat illegal robocalls originating from those numbers.”²

¹ *In the Matter of Combatting Illegal Calls through FCC Numbering Policies, Implementation of TRACED Act Section 6(a) – Knowledge of Customers by Entities with Access to Numbering Resources, Numbering Policies for Modern Communications, Telephone Number Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers*, WC Docket Nos. 26-49, 20-67, 13-97, 07-243, FCC 26-17, (adopted March 26, 2026 rel. March 27, 2026) online at: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-26-17A1.docx>, 91 Federal Register 25312 (May 8, 2026) online at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/08/2026-09134/combating-illegal-robocalls-through-fcc-numbering-policies-implementation-of-traced-act-knowledge>.

² *Id.* at ¶ 1, *mimeo* at page 2.

NARUC is already on record that a broad FCC investigation into numbering resource sales is long overdue, since these practices, among other things, “impede investigations of illegal robocalling.”³ Indeed, in ¶ 5 of the *NPRM*, the FCC acknowledges that the majority of the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau’s Robocall investigations *have involved resold numbers*, citing in note 11, to, *inter alia*, the NARUC White Paper adopted by NARUC’s Board of Directors unanimously in February of this year.⁴

In ¶ 30 of the *NPRM*, the FCC seeks comment on statements from page 8 of the NARUC White Paper, which point out – accurately – that [1] many service providers receiving *intermediate numbers* often do not comply with their obligation to file, [2] even when they do, do not provide the names and contact information of the service providers providing the numbers, in some cases claiming to state commission staff that privacy and legal concerns make them “reluctant” to provide this information (and sometimes completely refusing to do so), and [3] there is lack of consistency and adequacy in the completion of the ‘Notes/Assignee’ field in FCC Form 502. In ¶ 31 of the *NPRM*, the FCC also seeks comment on how it can improve NRUF Form data to aid detection of, and enforcement efforts against, illegal robocalls, as well as to inform numbering administration and policy development

To facilitate robocall investigations, impede the use of numbering resources by bad actors, and extend the life of the North American Numbering plan, the FCC should make the changes cited, *infra*, to NRUF reporting applicable to all service providers that hold numbering resources and permit

³ Ramsay, J.B., Notice of Oral and Written Ex Partes filed in the proceedings captioned: *In the Matter of Interconnected VoIP Numbering Authorization Application Filed by NumberBarn, LLC Pursuant to Section 52.15(g)(3) of the Commission’s Rules*, WC Docket No. 19-99; and *In the Matter of Eliminating Ex Ante Pricing Regulation and Tariffing of Telephone Access Charges*, WC Docket No. 20-71 (Filed September 1, 2025), at page 3, available online at: <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/10902102247497/1>.

⁴ National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissions, *Perspectives and Recommendations on How Telephone Number Conservation Can be Enhanced to Extend the Life of the North American Number Plan (NANP) and Reduce Illegal Robocalling Activity* at 12 (adopted Feb. 11, 2026) <https://pubs.naruc.org/pub/0CFAB9E5-CC00-D558-D278-2CBA85370EB1> (NARUC White Paper) (“Through extensive research, State Commissions have linked illegal robocalls to [service providers] that are actively utilizing the wholesale market”).

State commissions to direct NANPA to deny numbering resource requests when service providers fail to comply with NRUF and other numbering administration obligations.

In support of this position, NARUC states as follows:

NARUC'S INTEREST

NARUC is a nonprofit organization founded in 1889. Its members include the government agencies in the fifty States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands charged with regulating the activities of telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC is recognized by Congress in several statutes⁵ and consistently by the Courts,⁶ as well as a host of federal agencies,⁷ as the proper entity to represent the collective interests of State utility commissions. In the Telecommunications Act,⁸ Congress references NARUC as “the national organization of the State commissions” responsible for economic and safety regulation of the intrastate operation of carriers and utilities.⁹

⁵ See 47 U.S.C. §410(c) (1971) (Congress designated NARUC to nominate members of Federal-State Joint Board to consider issues of common concern); see also 47 U.S.C. §254 (1996); see also *NARUC, et al. v. ICC*, 41 F.3d 721 (D.C. Cir 1994) (explaining that “[c]arriers, to get the cards, applied to . . . [NARUC], an interstate umbrella organization that, as envisioned by Congress, played a role in drafting the regulations that the ICC issued to create the “bingo card” system”).

⁶ See, e.g., *U.S. v. Southern Motor Carrier Rate Conference, Inc.*, 467 F. Supp. 471 (N.D. Ga. 1979), *aff'd* 672 F.2d 469 (5th Cir. 1982), *aff'd en banc on reh'g*, 702 F.2d 532 (5th Cir. 1983), *rev'd on other grounds*, 471 U.S. 48 (1985) (noting that “[t]he District Court permitted [NARUC] to intervene as a defendant. Throughout this litigation, the NARUC has represented the interests of the Public Service Commissions of those States in which the defendant rate bureaus operate.” 471 U.S. 52, n. 10. See also, *Indianapolis Power and Light Co. v. ICC*, 587 F.2d 1098 (7th Cir. 1982); *Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission v. FCC*, 513 F.2d 1142 (9th Cir. 1976); compare, *NARUC v. FERC*, 475 F.3d 1277 (D.C. Cir. 2007); *NARUC v. DOE*, 851 F.2d 1424, 1425 (D.C. Cir. 1988); *NARUC v. FCC*, 737 F.2d 1095 (D.C. Cir. 1984), *cert. denied*, 469 U.S. 1227 (1985).

⁷ NRC Atomic Safety and Licensing Board *Memorandum and Order* (Granting Intervention to Petitioners and Denying Withdrawal Motion), LBP-10-11, *In the Matter of U.S. Department of Energy (High Level Waste Repository)* Docket No. 63-001-HLW; ASLBP No. 09-892-HLW-CABO4, *mimeo* at 31 (June 29, 2010).

⁸ *Communications Act of 1934*, as amended by the *Telecommunications Act of 1996*, 47 U.S.C. §151 *et seq.*, Pub. L. No. 101-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996) (West Supp. 1998) (“Act” or “1996 Act”).

⁹ See 47 U.S.C. § 410(c) (1971) (NARUC nominates members to FCC Joint Federal-State Boards, which consider universal service, separations, and related concerns and provide formal recommendations that the FCC must act upon; *Cf.* 47 U.S.C. § 254 (1996).

NARUC has an obvious interest in this proceeding. Over 25 years ago, the FCC delegated authority to State Commissions to monitor numbering activities in their jurisdictions.¹⁰ Even iVoIP providers gaining direct access to numbering resources via the FCC, must, pursuant to a 2015 order provide a 30-day notice to a State Commissions when they seek numbering resources from that state.¹¹ The logic underlying those delegations explains NARUC's interest in this proceeding. Not only do NARUC's State Commission members share the FCC's goal of reducing robocall abuses but the *NPRM* proposals will also undoubtedly impact State Commissions' long-standing efforts to conserve numbering resources.

DISCUSSION

When provided, State commissions routinely review NRUF reports to determine numbering resource use in their jurisdictions. Ignoring current industry guidelines¹² and NRUF instructions,¹³ some wholesale service providers do not identify the recipients of intermediate numbering resources on NRUF forms. That makes it impossible for either federal or state regulators to determine the current resource holder, much less trace any subsequent inappropriate resale of numbering resources. Paragraph 31 of the *NPRM* seeks comment on how the FCC can improve the NRUF Form data to aid detection of, and enforcement efforts against, illegal robocalls, as well as to inform numbering administration and policy development. NARUC's white paper provides several useful suggestions:

The FCC should require files to list more than one regulatory contact in NRUF reports.

As explained in the NARUC White Paper, State regulators often have difficulty reaching service providers to get clarification of the NRUF reports. A simple way to mitigate this problem is to require service providers to identify in their reports more than one employee, along with each

¹⁰ See, e.g., 47 C.F.R. § 52.9(b); 47 CFR § 52.15(g)(3)(ii)(B), (G)

¹¹ *In the matter of Numbering Policies for Modern Communications et al.*, WC Docket Nos. 13-97 et al., Report and Order, 30 FCC Rcd 6839, 6841, ¶ 43 (2015).

¹² See, ATIS Thousands Block and Central Office Code Administrative Guidelines (TBCOCAG) § 4.4.3. See also, TBCOCAG § 21 [Glossary], at 169.

¹³ *Geographic NRUF Form 502*, "Instructions" tab, https://www.nanpa.com/sites/default/files/2024-05/Jun16_NrufForm502Geo.xlsm.

employees' specific contact information (e-mail and direct line) to answer questions.¹⁴ A service provider or reseller should never be allowed to just provide a generic e-mail, office number, or inbox for inquiries. Experience has shown that generic contact information is a prescription for delay and inefficiency. Requiring at least two contacts eliminates the not-uncommon delay that occurs when the designated contacts is on leave or has left the provider's employ.

The FCC should require Service providers receiving Numbering Resources to classify those telephone number in NRUF Reports by the way they are used.¹⁵

Currently, NRUF "intermediate numbers" are defined as those that the provider of record has made available to resellers of their telephone numbers to provision that resellers' end users. The *NPRM* proposes to split that "intermediate" numbering category into three categories: "Intermediate assigned" are numbers actually assigned to an end-user customer. "Intermediate other" numbers include the reseller's administrative numbers, aging numbers, intermediate numbers used for further resale, or reserved numbers. Finally, "Intermediate available" numbers are a reseller's available numbers.¹⁶ The *NPRM* also logically proposes to require the provider of record for the numbering resource to provide the status of its intermediate numbers by obtaining any necessary information from the service providers reselling its numbers. Providers of record are presumptively fully capable of updating their wholesale contracts to require receipt of such information from their resellers—particularly on the mere biannual basis that NRUF reporting requires.¹⁷ Although the NARUC White Paper, at page 9, does not directly address this FCC proposal, it specifically recommends that the FCC provide clarification on the meaning of the term "intermediate" in number assignments. The listed FCC proposals are consistent with that request, although including intermediate numbers used for further resale in a category that also contains intermediate administrative, aging, or reserved numbers may obscure the amount of numbering resources being used for further resale. Given this, an additional category may be necessary.

¹⁴ See, *Notice*, ¶ 41.

¹⁵ NARUC White Paper at pp. 7-8.

¹⁶ *Notice*, ¶ 33.

¹⁷ *Notice*, ¶ 34

The FCC should specify that service providers that do not properly meet their NRUF reporting obligations will be denied access to further Numbering Resources

NARUC's white paper also recommends, at page 9, that service providers, that do not properly meet their NRUF reporting obligations for those numbering resources, be denied access to further numbering resources until they are compliant with all requirements. Providers failing to meet these obligations should be subject to potential reclamation of current numbering resources. That recommendation makes clear the Association's support for the *NPRM*'s proposal that providers of record should be responsible for determining the status of their intermediate numbers. As the *NPRM* points out, the providers of record should know their resellers well enough to ensure that their resellers do not provide numbering resources to illegal robocalling entities, underscoring the importance of the FCC's Know-Your-Customer obligations. Providers of record should also be able to update their contracts to obtain complete information from their resellers. The *NPRM* proposal to codify the requirement that providers of record specifically identify their resale customers and provide accurate contact information for resellers will provide valuable information necessary for efficient investigations.¹⁸ The FCC should also require identification of entities that receive ported numbering resources.

The FCC should require NRUF reports to explain unusually large number blocks categorized as Aging and set a trigger for investigations.

NARUC's White Paper, at pages 9 – 10, identifies problems with NRUF reports that include a large volume of "aging" numbering resources. Some service providers identify more than 10 percent of their thousand blocks as aging. High numbers of aging telephone numbers suggest number rotation or other misuses of numbering resources. It is important for regulators to be able to distinguish between numbering resources that are being used for legitimate purposes, i.e., to replenish high churn rates and those being used for illegal robocalls. Accordingly, the FCC should create a threshold for aging numbers that would trigger an investigation by the FCC and/or NANPA if exceeded. At a minimum, the NRUF should be revised to require service providers that report high levels of aging numbers in a thousands block (ten percent or more) to explain the reason for the high level, along with providing information on when the resources will be returned to the pool for use by others. NARUC also recommends that the FCC "facilitate methods" to have abandoned numbers

¹⁸ Notice, ¶ 34.

returned to the pool.¹⁹

The FCC should specify that State Commissions can direct NANPA to withhold numbering resources where a service provider has violated numbering reporting and robocalling rules.

The *Notice* asks if state commissions should be granted the authority to direct NANPA to withhold numbering resources when a service provider has violated numbering reporting and robocalling rules.²⁰ The short answer is yes. The NARUC White Paper explicitly calls for service providers that do not properly meet their NRUF reporting obligations be denied access to further numbering resources. This *NPRM* proposal is consistent with, and an improvement on, that NARUC recommendation. State commissions are often the best situated and have strong incentives to efficiently investigate whether NRUF reporting is complete and/or if a report raise issues. State commissions are well positioned to [1] identify resource ordering and forecasting processes that might be suspicious, and [2] assist in determining whether a numbering forecast is realistic based on state economic data. In states nearing an NPA code exhaust, state commissions already review requests and work with service providers to find low contaminated blocks to transfer to avoid opening a new Central Office code. But state investigations are often stymied because states lack enforcement mechanisms to address rule violations or questionable practices. Giving the state's the ability to direct NANPA to deny numbering resource requests would deter non-compliance and promote efficiency.

The FCC should prohibit the sale of numbering resources.

The FCC's numbering rules explicitly prohibit the acquisition of toll-free numbers for the purpose of selling those numbers to another entity for a fee. 47 CFR § 52.107(a)(2). Service management systems and local exchange carriers' toll-free database access tariffs are required to include specific language regarding the prohibition on the sale of toll-free numbers. 47 CFR § 52.107(b). Although there are no similar rules regarding non-toll-free numbers, the FCC has stated on several occasions that numbering resources are not the property of service providers and subscribers and cannot be sold. For example, in the CIC Order, the FCC indicated on several occasions that telephone numbers were not the property of the service provider since they are a public resource.²¹ In the *First VoIP Numbering Report and Order*, the FCC noted that numbering resources

¹⁹ NARUC White Paper at 10.

²⁰ *Notice*, ¶ 64, 65.

²¹ CiC Order, 12 FCC Rcd. 17876, ¶ 59, 1997.

are a public resource not owned by the service provider or the subscriber.²² In the *IP-Based TRS Report and Order*, the FCC noted that “[w]e also remind all parties that telephone numbers are a public resource, not private property. They may not be bought or sold.”²³ State commissions have found an open market for this public resource in contravention of Commission guidance and industry guidelines. This market does not facilitate efficient numbering resource use, since “vanity” numbers are sold, leaving other, less desirable numbers stranded and unused.²⁴ The FCC should promulgate a rule explicitly prohibiting the sale of numbering resources. Additionally, the FCC should deny direct access to any entity that sells numbering resources and should use its audit authority to investigate related complaints.

Conclusion

To facilitate robocall investigations, reduce or eliminate the use of numbering resources by bad actors, and extend the life of the North American Numbering plan, at a minimum, the FCC should make the requested changes to NRUF reporting applicable to all service providers that hold numbering resources and permit State commissions to direct NANPA to deny numbering resource requests when service providers fail to comply with NRUF and other numbering administration obligations.

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²² *First VoIP Numbering Report and Order*, 22 FCC Rcd. 19531, 23 FCC Rcd. 1647, ¶ 20, n. 63, (2007).

²³ *IP-Based TRS Report and Order*, 23 FCC Rcd. 11591, ¶ 32. 2008

²⁴ NARUC White Paper at 13-14.