



Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor

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317 area code relief: Consumer comments invited, Public hearings scheduled

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is encouraging consumers to comment on proposed changes to central Indiana's 317 telephone area code. Consumers may comment by:

1. Speaking at any of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission's (IURC's) upcoming public field hearings, or
2. Sending written comments to the OUCC by the close of business on December 29, 2014.

IURC public field hearings are scheduled for:

- **Indianapolis:** Friday, September 26, 2014, 10:00 a.m.: PNC Center, 101 W. Washington St., Room 222.
- **Carmel:** Wednesday, October 1, 2014, 6:00 p.m.: Carmel Clay School District Office Boardroom, 5201 E. Main St.
- **Franklin:** Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 6:00 p.m.: Franklin College Student Center Branigin Room, 101 Branigin Blvd.
- **Danville:** Wednesday, October 29, 2014: 6:00 p.m.: Danville High School, 100 Warrior Way.
- **Greenfield:** Monday, December 1, 2014, 6:00 p.m.: City Hall Council Chambers, 10 S. State St.

An OUCC informational session will start 30 minutes before each field hearing. During the IURC hearings:

- Oral and written consumer comments will be accepted.
- Comments carry equal weight whether they are oral or written, and will become part of the case's evidentiary record.
- Commissioners are not allowed to answer questions. However, OUCC and IURC staff will be available before, during and after each hearing.

The 317 area code, covering Indianapolis and most of its suburbs, is projected to run out of numbers in 2017. As a result, the telecommunications industry has filed a formal request with the IURC to add a new area code using the "all services overlay" method. This is the same approach currently being implemented in Indiana's 812 area code, where the new 930 area code will debut in the coming months.

Under an all services overlay:

- All consumers in the 317 area would keep their current 317 numbers.
- The new area code, when added, would be superimposed over the entire 317 area. It would be assigned only to **new** customers/phones/devices throughout the region.

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- Ten-digit dialing (area code + number) for local calls would eventually become mandatory throughout the 317 area.
- Toll calls would still use 11 digits (1 + area code + number).
- Consumers would not need to reprogram existing cell phones, fax machines, etc. with new numbers if the pre-programmed numbers already include the area code.

Indiana is one of 39 states, along with most Canadian provinces and the Caribbean, that have been required to add new area codes over the last two decades due to the proliferation of wireless phones and other communications devices.

All new area codes that have been introduced in the United States since 2008 have been implemented through the overlay method. Before 2008, most new area codes were implemented using a geographic split. Under geographic splits, consumers were able to continue using seven-digit dialing for local calls. However, large numbers of consumers were required to change their numbers. As a result, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, government agencies, and other entities were required to change signage, advertising, business cards, and stationery to reflect new numbers, and were required to incur the costs of doing so.

With an overlay, only documents and signage showing seven-digit telephone numbers would have to be changed. For existing numbers, the only update required under the proposed overlay would be the addition of “317.” The gradual transition to ten-digit dialing would allow businesses and other entities to update materials in the normal course of reprinting or reordering, making it less costly and less time-consuming for many consumers to adjust to the changes.

The OUCC, the state agency representing consumer interests in cases before the IURC, is scheduled to file testimony in this case on January 6, 2015.

More information, including the industry’s request, is available online at www.in.gov/oucc/2800.htm.

Consumers who are unable to attend a field hearing but wish to submit written comments may do so via the OUCC’s Website at www.in.gov/oucc/2361.htm, or by mail, email, or fax:

- **Mail:** Consumer Services Staff
Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor
115 W. Washington St., Suite 1500 South
Indianapolis, IN 46204
- **email:** uccinfo@oucc.IN.gov
- **Fax:** (317) 232-5923

Written comments the OUCC receives by December 29, 2014 will be filed with the Commission and included in the case’s formal evidentiary record. Comments should include the consumer’s **name, mailing address**, and a reference to “**IURC Cause No. 44513.**” Consumers with questions about submitting written comments can contact the OUCC’s consumer services staff toll-free at 1-888-441-2494.

(IURC Cause No. 44513)

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) represents Indiana consumer interests before state and federal bodies that regulate utilities. As a state agency, the OUCC’s mission is to represent all Indiana consumers to ensure quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices possible through dedicated advocacy, consumer education, and creative problem solving.

Visit us at www.IN.gov/OUCC, www.twitter.com/IndianaOUCC, or www.facebook.com/IndianaOUCC.