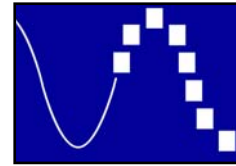


April 12, 2007



Majority Leader Tommie Williams  
236 State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Majority Leader Williams:

As the nation's leading companies developing and delivering voice innovations over the Internet, we are writing to seek changes in HB 394 which, as written, would both slow critical broadband enabled benefits from reaching Georgia consumers and stifle Internet innovation.

The VON Coalition believes that with the right public policies, Voice over Internet Protocol or VoIP can make talking more affordable, businesses more productive, the Internet more valuable, and Americans more safe and secure. In fact across the country, VoIP competition could save consumers an astonishing \$100 billion over the next 5 years.<sup>1</sup> For Georgia consumers, VoIP innovations will deliver new competition, lower prices, and improved ways to communicate.

We commend Georgia policymakers for being at the forefront of pragmatic policy approaches for unleashing the potential of broadband enabled services like VoIP. For example, last year the Georgia General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed into law, SB 120 preventing the State Public Service Commission from exercising any jurisdiction over the rates, terms, and conditions of VoIP in order to "encourage the adoption and use of such services by Georgia consumers."

We support HB 394's laudable goal to preserve funding of Georgia's 911 network and to ensure that those companies that are now required to provide E911 service also contribute. However, we are concerned that the definitions of VoIP contained in Section 3 and section 2(17.1) are overly broad and do not conform to the FCC's definition of "Interconnected VoIP" for which it applied E911 obligations. While the FCC has applied E911 obligations to "interconnected VoIP" providers, there are numerous other innovative VoIP services which -- like a walkie talkie or instant messenger -- allow people to communicate but do not have 911 obligations. These non-interconnected VoIP services which are not required by the FCC to provide E911 might nonetheless be required to pay Georgia 911 fees -- slowing broadband enabled benefits from reaching Georgia consumers. HB 394 can be perfected by utilizing the FCC's definition of Interconnected VoIP and limiting fees to only those services which are required by the FCC to provide E911.

As the General Assembly has previously recognized, VoIP can play a critical role in boosting broadband demand, putting new tools in the hands of consumers and small businesses to enhance productivity, manage daily affairs, and enjoy leisure pursuits. We look forward to

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<sup>1</sup> Micra report (available online at <http://www.micradc.com/news/news.html>) found that VoIP competition can save consumers \$102 billion over the next 5 years.

continuing to working with Georgia leaders to forge pragmatic solutions that enable consumers, businesses, and the economy to achieve the full promise and potential that VoIP can deliver.

Sincerely,

**The VON Coalition**

**About the VON Coalition:**

The Voice on the Net or VON Coalition consists of leading VoIP companies, on the cutting edge of developing and delivering voice innovations over Internet. The coalition, which includes AccessLine, AT&T, BMX, BT Americas, CallSmart, Cisco, Convedia, Covad, EarthLink, Google, iBasis, i3 Voice and Data, Intel, Intrado, Microsoft, New Global Telecom, Openwave, Pandora Networks, PointOne, Pulver.com, Skype, Switch Business Solutions, T-Mobile USA, United Online, USA Datanet, VocalData, Veraz Networks, and Yahoo! works to advance regulatory policies that enable Americans to take advantage of the full promise and potential of VoIP. The Coalition believes that with the right public policies, Internet based voice advances can make talking more affordable, businesses more productive, jobs more plentiful, the Internet more valuable, and Americans more safe and secure. Since its inception, the VON Coalition has promoted pragmatic policy choices for unleashing VoIP's potential. <http://www.von.org>