



March 8, 2012

The Honorable Michael Garrity, Chairman
House Science, Technology, and Energy Committee
New Hampshire State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 48

Dear Chairman Garrity:

The Voice on the Net (VON) Coalition¹, which represents the nation's leading companies developing and delivering voice innovations over the Internet, writes to express its thanks to you and your committee for your consideration of SB 48 and urge its passage. In particular, we support the policy that Internet Protocol-enabled services and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services should not be subject to regulation by the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission.

IP communications can be a force for increased competition, a platform for innovation, a driver for broadband deployment and a vehicle for continued economic growth. In fact, with the right policies, IP communications competition can save New Hampshire consumers millions of dollars annually – putting real money back into consumers' pockets when they really need it. Further, by harnessing IP communications as a broadband driver (since, for example, VoIP calls are carried over broadband connections), increased broadband adoption in New Hampshire will create jobs as the country works its way out of these difficult economic times.

To help ensure that New Hampshire consumers can benefit from these transformative Internet communications services, SB 48 clarifies that Internet Protocol-enabled service and VoIP are not subject to state regulation related to the entry, rates or terms of service. The bill maintains the status quo regarding other statutory provisions, including any currently applicable taxes, 911 fees or laws that apply to other business in the state.

By adopting these provisions, New Hampshire would join federal policymakers and more than 22 states that have recognized that to unleash the vast benefits that IP communications can deliver, the service should not be subject to a potential patchwork of conflicting state regulatory models. These provisions are particularly important for consumers living in rural New Hampshire who may not yet enjoy the benefits of broadband and voice competition.

¹The Voice on the Net or VON Coalition consists of leading VoIP companies, on the cutting edge of developing and delivering voice innovations over the Internet. The coalition, which includes AT&T, Broadvox, BT, Cloud Communications Alliance, Google, iBasis, Microsoft, Nextiva, Skype, Vonage 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>



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Rather than adopting state-specific rules for VoIP, government leaders in states like Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin have all taken steps to prevent state regulation of IP communications in order to boost broadband deployment, make phone service more affordable, and harness IP communications vast potential for important public policy goals. We encourage you to follow suit and continue to push for the passage of SB 48.

Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions. And thank you again for your leadership on this critical policy issue.

Sincerely,

The VON Coalition

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