1 BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION 2 3 4 In the Matter of UNDOCKETED : 5 : Transaction between GTE : 6 Corporation and Bell Atlantic,: whereby GTE will become a : 7 wholly-owned subsidiary of : Bell Atlantic. 8 9 10 PROCEEDINGS: WORKSHOP 11 12 BEFORE: CHAIRMAN JOE GARCIA 13 COMMISSIONER J. TERRY DEASON COMMISSIONER SUSAN F. CLARK COMMISSIONER JULIA L. JOHNSON 14 COMMISSIONER E. LEON JACOBS, JR. 15 DATE: 16 Monday, March 1, 1999 17 TIME: Commenced at 1:30 p.m. 18 Concluded at 5:10 p.m. 19 PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center 20 Room 148 4075 Esplanade Way 21 Tallahassee, Florida 22 REPORTED BY: H. RUTHE POTAMI, CSR, RPR FPSC Commission Reporter 23 24 25 DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE 02873 MAR-58 FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

IN ATTENDANCE: BETH KEATING, FPSC Division of Legal Services. CINDY MILLER, FPSC General Counsel's Office. KIM CASWELL, GEOFFREY GOULD and MARK J. MATHIS, GTE Corporation/Bell Atlantic Corporation. MONICA BARONE and DAVID M. EISENBERG, Sprint Communicaitons Company Limited Partnership. OLUKAYODE RAMOS, LOU BENDER, DAVID NILSON, RICHARD SMITH and MARK BUECHELE, Supra Telecommunications and Information Systems, Inc. RHONDA MERRITT and JOHN S. GARDNER, AT&T Communications of the Southern States, Inc.

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(Workshop convened at 1:30 p.m.)
3	CHAIRMAN GARCIA: Good afternoon. This is
4	the GTE/Bell Atlantic merger workshop. To expedite
5	matters, we may have Staff conduct it, because some of
6	us may be coming in and out during this and we want to
7	make sure that it runs smoothly; and so Ms. Keating is
8	going to be running it from over there.
9	Clearly, as you all know, this is an issue
10	that was already dealt with by the Commission on
11	December 7th. We're simply going through this
12	workshop because there was so much interest we made it
13	a Commissioner workshop, and this will determine
14	whether we have some additional comments to make to
15	the FCC on some of these issues. Is there anything
16	else that you want me to touch on?
17	MS. KEATING: I think that's it.
18	CHAIRMAN GARCIA: I understand that Supra
19	has a power point presentation that it wants to make,
20	and we're going to do that after break so that the
21	Commissioners can transfer themselves to that side of
22	the room. I'll say from the onset that I'll be
23	leaving at various times during this thing, but I'll
24	look at the record later. All right.
25	MS. KEATING: The first presentation up is

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1	GTE/Bell Atlantic and, as I understand it, the first
2	presenter is Geoffrey Gould.
3	MS. CASWELL: Just to give you some
4	background, Mr. Gould is GTE's vice-president for
5	government and regulatory affairs.
6	MR. GOULD: Thank you. I appreciate the
7	opportunity to appear before the Commission to discuss
8	the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger and why it's good for
9	competition and beneficial to the citizens of Florida.
10	I believe that mergers can and do create
11	valuable beneficial outcomes. I personally am a
12	veteran of a large telecom merger, specifically the
13	merger between GTE and ConTel (phonetic) Corporation
14	in 1991.
15	In the right circumstances, mergers make the
16	new company a better competitor, a stronger service
17	provider and a better corporate citizen. I believe
18	the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger is just such a
19	combination.
20	The Bell Atlantic/GTE merger creates a new
21	company that will accelerate the availability of real
22	customer choice in Florida and across the nation. On
23	a national basis, we believe this merger is enormously
24	pro-competitive for at least six reasons.
25	First: This merger will finally break down
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the barriers between RBOCs and finally bring about 1 significant big LEC to big LEC competition in local 2 telephony across the country. 3 Second: From a broad perspective, this 4 merger is an essential step in establishing a 5 competitive national market for packaged 6 telecommunications services. 7 This merger is just about the single Third: 8 most pro-competitive development that one can imagine 9 for the Internet. 10 This merger is an important step in Fourth: 11 establishing a fourth national facilities-based 12 competitor in the long distance market. 13 This merger will combine Fifth: 14 complementary cellular properties and create a 15 wireless provider that is able to compete on a 16 national basis; something that is increasingly 17 becoming a table stake in the telecom marketplace. 18 And, finally, this merger combines 19 complementary international assets. 20 With that background, I now want to cover 21 why this merger is good for Florida; specifically, how 22 it will, as the companies integrate their operations, 23 create a different company and what that difference 24 will mean to the citizens of Florida. 25

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Perhaps the most important difference in the 1 new company is that this merger will allow it to be a 2 strong local competitor outside GTE's local franchised 3 areas in Florida. I think I need to make several 4 points here. 5 Since the passage of the Telecom Act in 6 1996, GTE has done its best to carry out an 7 aggressive, ambitious CLEC strategy. Although it's 8 fair to say we hit the ground running, frankly, we 9 haven't gotten very far. There are several factors 10 that have put severe limits on our CLEC strategy. 11 The cost of building service and 12 One: delivery platforms has turned out to be much higher 13 than expected, requiring more resources and greater 14 scale. We spent \$350 million on systems alone to 15 enable our CLEC to package telecommunications 16 17 products. Reselling has not turned out to be 18 Two: very successful. We believe over the long term 19 20 facilities-based competition is a much more effective way to compete out of franchise. 21 GTE simply does not have the brand 22 Three: 23 strength to effectively go out of franchise everywhere. 24 And, finally -- and this is probably the 25

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1 most critical factor -- we simply don't have the base 2 of anchor customers that's vital in supporting the 3 introduction of new services or the type of packaged 4 offerings that customers want.

5 At GTE we believe that competing out of 6 franchise is not a question of whether we want to or 7 not. We believe we have to in order to grow and be a 8 vibrant company. It's really a question of speed and 9 resources. Simply put, the merger with Bell Atlantic 10 provides a lot of the answers.

The merger gives the combined company the resources and scale necessary to support the high cost of building service and delivery platforms, to develop a much more economical and attractive package of services that will meet all the telecommunications needs of the typical customer, and to invest in a much stronger national brand.

You may have seen, for example,
MCI WorldCom's full-page Wall Street Journal ad soon
after their own merger touting its full service
telecommunications capabilities. Together GTE and
Bell Atlantic will have the strong brand necessary to
effectively roll out similar national advertising
campaigns.

Most important, however, the Bell

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Atlantic/GTE merger provides that necessary base of 1 anchor customers. Many of these customers are in 2 Florida. In testimony before the Senate antitrust 3 subcommittee, GTE's chairman, Chuck Lee, announced 4 that the combined company plans to enter 21 major 5 markets within 18 months of closing the merger. 6 Miami, Orlando and Jacksonville were on that list. So 7 we -- the new company is committed to competing out of 8 franchise here in Florida. 9 As with any other business, whether you're 10 talking about selling mufflers or VCRs or a package of 11

12 telecommunications services, development starts where 13 customer volumes make it economically doable. 14 Eventually customer volumes drive the economics that 15 enable expansion to small business and residential 16 markets.

17 Florida is one of GTE's most important states in terms of the amount of territory covered and 18 19 the existing facilities. It's logical to project that 20 in due time the combined company will have the 21 wherewithal to launch competitive attacks in places beyond greater Miami, Orlando, and Jacksonville when 22 23 sufficient market demand exists and a reasonable business case can be made for entry. 24 25 So we don't hold out this group of 21

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markets as an exhaustive list. We view it more as 1 where we'll start, but like any business enterprise, 2 we aren't likely to launch into markets where we can't 3 make a reasonable business case. 4 Like going after residential customers who 5 currently enjoy below cost prices, competing there 6 7 would be illogical. Logic aside, the new company wants to serve residential customers out of franchise. 8 We've built our business in Florida and elsewhere on 9 residential and small business markets, and once we're 10 established in an area, it's likely we'd look for ways 11 to attack those same markets out of franchise. 12 But the key here is dealing with universal 13 service. Universal service reform is a necessary 14 prerequisite to broad competition in the high cost 15 areas in Florida. Unless implicit subsidies are made 16 explicit, as the Telecom Act suggested was necessary, 17 18 competition will not flourish. 19 In addition, to be a strong pro-competitive -- in addition to be strongly 20 21 pro-competitive out of franchise, the merger will make GTE a better service provider in franchise. Our 22 existing in-franchise customers will benefit from the 23 best practices of Bell Atlantic and GTE in proved 24 efficiencies and in proved financial strength; and the 25

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new company will work hard to ensure that its brands 1 represent high quality both in and out of franchise. 2 The boost in scale and scope deserves a 3 special mention with it comes to in-franchise 4 The reason? The heft we gain from the 5 customers. merger will permit the new company to provide bundled 6 offerings far more quickly and far more aggressively. 7 8 As you know, our existing residential customers really haven't experienced that benefit yet. 9 That's because GTE lacks the muscle to roll out fully 10 11 integrated solutions across the board. The merger 12 would bulk us up significantly, however. That extra bulk in tandem with our drive to compete out of 13 14 franchise adds up to benefits for our in-franchise 15 customers. That's because the products and services 16 we develop to defeat incumbents in Miami, Orlando, and 17 Jacksonville could be more quickly deployed to customers on the old home turf. 18 Another major benefit of the Bell 19 20 Atlantic/GTE merger concerns the boost it provides to 21 the Internet. The merger will allow the new company 22 to more rapidly expand its Internet platforms and services, providing enhanced services to all types of 23 customers and promoting competition both in and out of 24 franchise. 25

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One of the most compelling reasons why this merger is pro-competitive is rooted in the provision of Internet and data services. Without minimizing one bit the importance of traditional telephony, GTE and Bell Atlantic believe the Internet is the future of telecommunications.

7 It's important to continue nurturing 8 competition among Internet service providers, 9 especially ones that are actually building networks. 10 In that regard, the merger is enormously beneficial 11 for the Internet in two separate ways. First, it will 12 allow GTE to introduce a host of new Internet services 13 and a broader range of advanced data services.

Again, the key lies in Bell Atlantic's 14 customer base. As I've said, GTE's current national 15 profile is primarily rural and suburban serving 16 territories, territories that are disbursed across 17 18 wide geographic areas. This customer base is not sufficiently concentrated to support the rapid 19 introduction of new Internet services that require 20 21 substantial up-front investments in equipment and facilities. 22

The merger, however, will give GTE access to Bell Atlantic's much more concentrated customer base in the northeast, not to mention the extensive Bell

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Atlantic marketing network. The opportunity to market
 to this base utilizing Bell Atlantic's sales network
 will provide the company with the scope and heft to
 introduce new services to all customers, including
 those in Florida.

In fact, GTE has already developed many of 6 these new services. Likewise, GTE's merger with Bell 7 8 Atlantic will allow it to bring advanced services, such as frame relay and ATM, to many more cities. GTE 9 is in the process of building a national network 10 called the Global Network Infrastructure, or GNI for 11 short, predominantly using fiber capacity leased from 12 13 Qwest. Right now GTE can invest in touchdown points for the GNI only in cities where GTE has the prospect 14 of serving enough customers to recoup its investment 15 16 in a point presence.

17 Leveraging the Bell Atlantic customer 18 relationships of major customers in the northeast who 19 have offices in Florida may create sufficient traffic 20 volumes to justify additional points of precedence 21 (sic) within the state.

The second reason the merger is enormously beneficial for the Internet is because it ensures the continued competitiveness of the national market for Internet backbone services.

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1	While GTE is the fourth largest Internet
2	backbone provider in size, we are significantly
3	smaller than the three largest; Cable & Wireless, MCI
4	WorldCom and Sprint. Bell Atlantic, on the other
5	hand, is not an Internet backbone provider. It is
6	only an Internet service provider reselling
7	connectivity from other backbone providers.
8	By combining with Bell Atlantic, GTE is able
9	to enhance its own Internet business by competing for
10	and winning more customers, not by gobbling up another
11	Internet company and risking any injury to
12	competition.
13	Another unique aspect of the
14	Bell Atlantic/GTE merger has to do with long distance
15	competition. Before discussing that, I want to say
16	that this merger does nothing I repeat does
17	nothing to relieve Bell Atlantic from its obligations
18	under Section 271 of the Telecommunications Act of
19	1996. However, the merger does offer the prospect of
20	creating a fourth national facilities-based provider
21	of long distance service.
22	As mentioned before, GTE is in the process
23	of building a national network. GTE currently cannot
24	afford to outfit the GNI to provide national long
25	distance service. The reason? We simply do not have
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the traffic volumes needed to justify investing in the 1 necessary toll switches and other facilities. GTE 2 currently provides interLATA long distance on a 3 nationwide basis as a reseller, relying on the network 4 and back office facilities of MCI WorldCom. 5 The merger, however, carries with it the 6 potential that we'll see significant increases in the 7 volume of long distance traffic that GTE can carry on 8 its own. That, in turn, makes investing in switches, 9 facilities, and points of precedence -- presence more 10 feasible. 11 12 In sum, Bell Atlantic's customer base, in combination with GTE's operating platforms and 13 experience, will allow for a large scale 14 facilities-based deployment of a long distance network 15 to compete with major long distance carriers. This is 16 17 particularly important, considering that the four 18 major facilities-based carriers recently became three 19 with the approval of the MCI WorldCom merger. I've briefly laid out our vision for the 20 combined company, and I appreciate your listening to 21 22 me. GTE and Bell Atlantic believe that the 23 24 Commission should welcome this merger, since it is in the best interests of the citizens of Florida. 25 The

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Commission should rest assured that it made the right 1 decision in approving the GTE/Bell Atlantic 2 transaction. In doing so, it joined 21 other states 3 that either have approved the merger or stated they 4 don't need to take further action with regard to it. 5 Another 13 states lack approval authority. 6 Because the mergers -- because the merger's 7 effects for consumers here will be unambiguously 8 positive, there is no reason for this Commission to 9 express any apprehension about it to the FCC. If the 10 Commission feels compelled to register its opinion 11 with the FCC, we'd appreciate you supporting the 12 merger. 13 With that, I'd like to turn our portion of 14 the presentation over to Mark Mathis, who is senior 15 vice-president, regulatory, for Bell Atlantic, and 16 he'll introduce you to Bell Atlantic. 17 Thank you very much. 18 MR. MATHIS: Mr. Chairman, members of the 19 20 Commission, I appreciate the opportunity to come here today and introduce you to Bell Atlantic and to talk a 21 little bit about the merger from our perspective. 22 First of all, let me say that we appreciate 23 the fact that you've already approved the merger, and 24 we wanted to express the fact that we think this will 25

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1	be a good thing for the citizens of Florida.
2	Let me discuss a little bit about Bell
3	Atlantic first. As you know, Bell Atlantic is not
4	much of a presence in Florida. We do not have any
5	local telephone company operations here. We're not an
6	ILEC; we're not a CLEC. We do have some long distance
7	customers, but we are not, I don't think by any
8	stretch of the imagination, a significant player in
9	the long distance market in Florida. We do
10	participate in the wireless market through PSC
11	PrimeCo, and our coverage does include most of the
12	state.
13	But let me tell you a little about Bell
14	Atlantic in the event that you're not familiar with
15	us. Bell Atlantic is one of the regional Bell
16	companies that was formed at divestiture. Originally
17	we had seven states; New Jersey, Pennsylvania,
18	Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the
19	District of Columbia.
20	In 1997 we consummated a merger with NYNEX.
21	NYNEX, of course, was also a regional Bell company
22	that served New York, a very small part of
23	Connecticut, and the New England states of
24	Massachusets, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and Rhode
25	Island. That merger was found by the Department of

Justice not to violate the antitrust laws. It was
 approved by all the states that had jurisdiction, and
 it was approved by the FCC.

Today we have 40 million access lines. 92 and a half percent of our central offices are digital. We have 4.7 million miles of fiber. We were the very first company to introduce equal access in Charleston, West Virginia. We introduced caller ID in New Jersey.

10 We're the company that serves the White House in Washington, Wall Street in Manhattan, Harvard 11 12 and MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the coal miners of West Virginia, the voters in the first presidential 13 14 primary in New Hampshire, and the lobster men in the 15 Maine area. We have 6 million wireless customers 16 worldwide, and we also have some other operations throughout the world. 17

Nevertheless, at Bell Atlantic it has always
been true that what comes first is our local telephone
company operations. We have a president in each one
of our states who, with their team, are focused on
their communities and making sure that they provide
outstanding service to our customers and work well
with their commissions.

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One of the things we're very proud of is

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economic development. We understand that the success 1 both for our company and for our communities and our 2 states is ensuring that our states are healthy, and we 3 realize that telecommunications is one of the engines 4 that makes that work. And so whether we're connecting 5 schools to the Internet in Maine and West Virginia or 6 distance learning in Maryland and Virginia, this is at 7 the top of our priorities. 8

9 Let me talk a little bit about the merger. 10 Unlike some transactions which are acquisitions, this 11 is a merger of equals. Our transaction with NYNEX was 12 a merger of equals, and what that means is we take the 13 best of the management team and the best practices 14 from the different companies and try and produce the 15 best company possible.

Now, it's hard to anticipate completely at this point what the best practices from GTE and Bell Atlantic will be, but we do know that we do have some differences that we're going to be able to capitalize on. For example, we are principally in large urban areas throughout the northeast. GTE has been more rural and suburban.

They, on the other hand, have a lot of experience in Internet and long distance that we don't, and we think that by combining the two

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companies with their different strengths, we're going 1 to be a much larger, more effective competitor, which 2 ultimately is what this merger is all about. 3 And if you look at what is going on in our 4 industry, you have AT&T which acquired McCaw and TCG 5 and TCI, and they're having alliances with other cable 6 companies; MCI with WorldCom, and MFS and UUNET; 7 Sprint with Deutch Telecom and France Telecom; SBC 8 with Pacific, SNET and Ameritech. We didn't start 9 this, but we have to live with it and we have to deal 10 with it, and we expect to be one of the companies that 11 is an effective competitor in this marketplace, and 12 this is really what this merger is all about. 13 Now, you've heard from Jeff about our desire 14 to be able to compete in 21 cities across the country, 15 including three here in Florida. Let me explain a 16 little bit how we expect that might work and the 17 advantages we think we bring to it. 18 19 In Bell Atlantic, Marriott's world 20 headquarters is right outside of Washington DC. 21 They're a very large customer of Bell Atlantic. We value our relationship with them. We hope they value 22 23 their relationship with us. We try to provide them 24 very good service. They have hotels all over Florida. We hope that we're able to use this concept of the 25

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anchor customer, as you might have heard of anchor 1 tenants in malls, to be able to gain an inside track 2 with Marriott, to be able to convince them to come 3 with the new Bell Atlantic/GTE throughout Florida. 4 Bell Atlantic has about 175 of the 500 5 Fortune headquarters in its territory, and these are 6 the kinds of things that we think that will permit us 7 to be able to compete here in Florida with BellSouth 8 and in other places with other large companies. 9 So that's what this merger from our 10 perspective is really all about. I appreciate the 11 opportunity to be able to introduce Bell Atlantic to 12 you, and we look forward to working with you in the 13 future, and we'd be happy to answer any questions 14 either now or later as you choose. Thank you. 15 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: You said that 92% of 16 your lines in the central offices were digital? 17 MR. MATHIS: That's right. 18 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: The 8% that's not, is 19 20 it in a certain geographical area or just --. 21 MR. MATHIS: I think it's more dispersed rural areas, and it's just a matter of when is the 22 economic time to make that conversion. But on the 23 other hand --24 25 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: What was the

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incentive, or what caused the transition to digital, 1 and was that a part of the company's strategy? I know 2 this is a twofold question. And how does that 3 reconcile with what GTE has done thus far with respect 4 to their central offices, if you know? 5 MR. MATHIS: I don't know the answer to the 6 latter. And with the first part, it permits you to 7 provide better service cheaper; and so, therefore, we 8 wanted to make those conversions as quickly as we can, 9 and it didn't necessarily follow, as some people might 10 think, that a smaller state would be last. Delaware 11 was our first, and they're one of our smaller states. 12 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Well, yeah. 13 That's why I was just -- it was -- that was interesting, 14 because you do serve -- though you serve those large 15 metropolitan areas, Wall Street, D.C., you do have 16 some small states. 17 MR. MATHIS: We have Vermont with 300 --18 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: New Hampshire. 19 MR. MATHIS: -- access lines. We have New 20 21 Hampshire with 700,000 access lines. And Vermont, 22 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Uh-huh. 23 is that the state where you all are doing something with the schools and libraries program, connecting all 24 the schools and libraries, or is that part of 25

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someone's -- one of the New England states? 1 MR. MATHIS: New Hampshire. 2 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Was it --3 MR. MATHIS: We have a proposal before the 4 Vermont board now as -- along with an incentive 5 regulation plan to do some hookups there, but we -- I 6 guess a year ago, we agreed to do this in New 7 8 Hampshire, but we're --COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And that --9 MR. MATHIS: -- working with it in all of 10 our states to do that. 11 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And that was -- with 12 13 respect to New Hampshire, you said it was a part of some incentive regulation --14 MR. MATHIS: No. That was Vermont. 15 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. I'm confusing 16 17 the two. MR. MATHIS: One of the things I've learned, 18 19 Commissioner, is every state is different, and each one has its own particular interest, and you have to 20 recognize those differences. 21 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Where is Olympia Snow 22 from? 23 MR. MATHIS: She's from Maine. 24 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: What did you all do 25

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1	in Maine? I'm confusing all of my states.
2	MR. MATHIS: We're hooking up the other
3	schools there.
4	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. And that was a
5	part of some
6	MR. MATHIS: Effort that we have there as
7	part of you know they have something called
8	Maine, Inc. and they're very pro-economic development
9	there, and the schools are you know, like
10	telecommunications are part of the engine that makes
11	that go.
12	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.
13	And, Ms. Caswell, you said that you have some
14	information on the percentage of the central offices
15	that are digital in
16	MR. GOULD: In Florida we're GTE is 100%
17	digital.
18	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Not in I mean, all
19	the territories. Do you have
20	MR. GOULD: Nationwide, I don't have that
21	with me. I think we're very close to 100%.
22	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: 100%?
23	MR. GOULD: If not 100%, yeah.
24	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And you all are being
25	in Texas

MR. GOULD: Our three largest states are 1 2 California, Texas and Florida. COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And you're 100% 3 digital in Texas? 4 5 MR. GOULD: Yes. COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I didn't know that. 6 7 Okay. Thank you. **COMMISSIONER JACOBS:** Your operations in 8 three cities in Florida, you're going to have, I 9 assume, a separate company, or will you be operating 10 under one of the companies? 11 MR. GOULD: Well, at this point in time, 12 the -- how the companies are going to be combined and 13 operated after the merger hasn't been precisely 14 determined. We're still going through that evaluation 15 process. But one of the options we certainly would 16 have would be to operate that as a separate 17 subsidiary. Whether we do that ultimately or not 18 remains to be seen. 19 COMMISSIONER JACOBS: If that were the case, 20 it would be a CLEC? 21 22 MR. GOULD: I'm sorry. I ---COMMISSIONER JACOBS: If that were the case, 23 would it be as a CLEC, or how would --24 25 MR. GOULD: Yes.

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COMMISSIONER JACOBS: Now, one of the things 1 you indicated was that you felt that this would 2 enhance the competitive environment for CLECs because 3 your presence is essentially going to meld together, I 4 guess, a partnership. Walk me through that again, and 5 I'm speaking now in terms of Internet. 6 MR. GOULD: In terms of the Internet? 7 COMMISSIONER JACOBS: Yeah. 8 MR. GOULD: Actually, the combination of GTE 9 and Bell Atlantic, one of the greatest benefits we get 10 is an increased number of relationships, as Mark was 11 saying earlier, with major customers in the northeast 12 that also have offices, for example, in Orlando. 13 Because Bell Atlantic has the relationship with them 14 and we don't, that gives us the ability to establish 15 service with them because of that relationship. They 16 have -- we have a -- they have a reputation. 17 That helps us not only in the Internet in 18 terms of selling services to those customers that they 19 20 already have relationships with, but in local and long distance as well. So we really think those new 21 customer relationships that the merged company gets 22 outside of the Bell Atlantic region helps us in all 23 parts of our business, not just the Internet. 24 COMMISSIONER JACOBS: 25 Thank you.

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COMMISSIONER DEASON: Are there any plans to
 provide residential service in your out-of-franchise
 markets in Florida; that being Orlando, Miami, and
 Jacksonville?

5 MR. GOULD: The plans would be to compete 6 wherever we can make money. And, as I said earlier, 7 we certainly are going to enter those three markets 8 where we can make a business case to do that. That, 9 typically, is in business markets first.

Our intent is to offer service to 10 residential customers in our out-of-franchise markets. 11 But once again, we believe that you have to be able to 12 make a business case to do that, and right now we 13 believe that in order to do that, universal service 14 issues have to be addressed. It's very difficult to 15 make money selling competitive products to customers 16 whose current prices are below cost. It's just not 17 18 possible.

So we believe once that's addressed -- and we do believe it will be addressed eventually -- that we will be serving residential customers out of franchise.

23 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Is BellSouth offering
 24 bundled services in GTE's service area in St. Pete?
 25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: BellSouth Mobility

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is, wireless service. 1 **COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:** Just wireless? They 2 aren't offering local, if you buy -- any kind of 3 bundle --4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They're offering 5 bundling. I mean, they are advertising it as a local 6 service offering with voice mail, other features, but 7 it is actually from wireless, BellSouth Mobility at 8 this point. 9 10 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. COMMISSIONER DEASON: Does the merger have 11 any effect whatsoever on your carrier of last resort 12 responsibility in your franchise area? 13 MR. GOULD: We don't believe that it does, 14 15 no. MS. KEATING: Okay. We are running just a 16 few minutes ahead of schedule, but I'd like to point 17 out for the participants I think it would be best to 18 proceed with the next presentation, in view of the 19 number of presentations that have to be made this 20 afternoon, and then if any participants have questions 21 that are specific to particular presentations, we can 22 take that up in the discussion section. 23 Also I need to point out to those of you 24 that are with the company making a presentation, if 25

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1	you are not specifically on the agenda or you're not
2	an attorney that's already identified yourself for the
3	court reporter, please state your name before you make
4	comments. Otherwise, your name won't be in the record
5	of the proceeding.
6	And the next presentation is Sprint and
7	Mr. Eisenburg.
8	MS. BARONE: Yes. And this is Monica Barone
9	for Sprint, and with me Mr. Eisenburg. He's
10	vice-president, state external affairs.
11	MR. EISENBERG: Thank you, Chairman Garcia
12	and Commissioners, for this opportunity to share
13	Sprint's views of the proposed merger of Bell Atlantic
14	and GTE.
15	As a global communications company, Sprint
16	recognizes that's these are, in fact, unique and
17	exciting times for the telecom industry. There are
18	new markets opening to competition. Internet growth
19	is meeting and exceeding expectations. Long distance
20	competition is intense and continues to intensify
21	every day. And state commissions like yours, along
22	with the FCC, are striving, mightily to wedge open the
23	doors to local competition.
24	In this environment we can reasonably expect
25	to see companies try to expand and diversify their
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1	services, capabilities, and reach. Inevitably some of
2	this will occur through mergers, alliances, or joint
3	ventures, and some of these mergers and alliances will
4	offer true benefits to consumers and be
5	pro-competitive. But the reason we have state and
6	federal communications laws, which are there to
7	protect consumers, and state and federal antitrust
8	laws, which protect our free markets, is to ensure
9	that healthy consolidations which are likely to
10	enhance competition, go forward, and those which
11	simply strengthen monopoly power do not.
12	The rapid acceleration of mergers between
13	large local telephone companies which have not yet
14	opened their markets to competition deeply troubles
15	us. To put this in perspective, when you examine this
16	proposed merger along with the proposed Ameritech/SBC
17	merger, we face the prospect of a marketplace in which
18	two supercarriers control roughly 70% of the local
19	market.
20	Bell Atlantic/GTE alone will control
21	58 million access lines. That's some 36% of the
22	nation's access lines, and this strikes me as a tragic
23	about-face and a return toward the old Ma Bell where
24	prices were high and customer choice was virtually
25	nonexistent.
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Local phone service today remains largely a 1 monopoly, notwithstanding the passage of the 2 Telecommunications Act of 1996. GTE and some regional 3 Bell operating companies have used every possible 4 litigation tactic to avoid their obligations under the 5 6 Telecom Act in order to maintain their local, monopolies. Local competition has developed much more 7 slowly than anyone had anticipated. Further 8 consolidation on the scale presented by the Bell 9 Atlantic/GTE merger could make these circumstances 10 irreversible. 11

To justify the formation of this very large 12 new entity, the parties have told you that they need 13 this kind of combined size, power, and wealth to 14 compete effectively. We say it just ain't so. Look 15 all around this industry and you see companies that 16 are far smaller than either Bell Atlantic or GTE 17 individually and they're providing good service and 18 competing effectively. 19

We share the sentiments of FCC Commissioner Susan Ness who told an audience at a Consumer Federation of America conference that she has yet to be convinced, quote, that the only way we can ever get large incumbent telephone companies to compete against other large incumbent telephone companies is if they

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1	all first reach some gargantuan threshold size.
2	This is not sumo wrestling. We believe that
3	the merger of Bell Atlantic and GTE would be bad for
4	competition and bad for consumers of the state of
5	Florida. Our concerns specifically fall in the
6	following areas.
7	First: The merger will eliminate Bell
8	Atlantic as one of the strongest potential competitors
9	in GTE's Florida territory.
10	Second: The increase in local markets
11	controlled by the merged companies would harm
12	competition in the local, long distance, and new
13	services markets.
14	Third: The merger will diminish the
15	effectiveness of regulation by reducing the number of
16	available benchmarks.
17	Fourth: The Telecom Act prohibits Bell
18	Atlantic from merging with GTE, which does provide
19	interexchange services, before Bell Atlantic gets
20	Section 271 approval from the FCC.
21	Fifth: The claim that the merger will
22	permit the parties to enter 21 new markets is neither
23	credible nor enforceable and cannot in any event
24	compensate for the anticompetitive effects of the
25	merger.
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1	And, sixth: The claim that the merger will
2	advance Internet competition is without merit.
3	Let me comment first on how we believe the
4	merger will eliminate Bell Atlantic as a potential
5	competitor in GTE Florida territory. The
6	consolidation that's been occurring in the
7	telecommunications industry recently, particularly
8	among incumbent LECs, represents an enormous
9	aggregation and concentration of market power that
10	will halt the development of effective local exchange
11	competition to the detriment of Florida consumers.
12	Absent the merger, Bell Atlantic would most
13	likely be a formidable competitor to GTE, as
14	envisioned by the Telecommunications Act. Before
15	announcing the proposed merger, GTE indicated that it
16	planned to expand its local presence outside of its
17	regions and compete against the RBOCs in their
18	territories. In fact, GTE has been certified as a
19	CLEC in several northeast states served by Bell
20	Atlantic.
21	Significantly, in Virginia GTE withdrew its
22	application for statewide CLEC authority the day
23	before filing for approval of the merger with this
24	Commission and with the FCC.
25	A number of factors make Bell Atlantic a

likely candidate to enter the GTE Florida market 1 absent this merger. First and foremost, there is 2 enormous traffic in the Florida-New York corridor. 3 NYNEX Long Distance chose Florida as one of its first 4 out-of-region states, and this was not by accident. 5 Bell Atlantic is also well positioned to 6 enter the Florida market because it has vast 7 experience as a local service provider, including 8 experience in engineering, design, marketing, and 9 operations. It has fully functioning back office 10 systems and OSS. It has the Bell brand and, by virtue 11 of its OSS background and LEC experience, Bell 12 Atlantic is capable of evaluating any alleged 13 obstacles to entry that are interposed by an incumbent 14 carrier. 15 There are few companies capable of entering 16 GTE Florida territory on a very large scale, and we 17 believe that Bell Atlantic clearly is one of them. 18 Second point: The increase in local markets 19 controlled by the merged companies would have 20 significant anticompetitive effects on local long 21 22 distance and new services markets. In each local market, Bell Atlantic and GTE 23 24 have tremendous control over the elements a new competing LEC needs to enter the market. Economists 25

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call these essential inputs. Plainly, both Bell
 Atlantic and GTE have the ability to exercise monopoly
 power over these essential inputs in order to deter
 new entry.

The 1996 act recognized this and it imposed 5 numerous obligations on the incumbent telephone 6 companies to provide the inputs on a commercially 7 8 liable basis. That's the 14-point checklist. As a matter of legislative finding, then, competitors in 9 local markets are especially vulnerable to 10 11 discrimination by incumbent monopolies. And it's 12 telling that three years after the Telecom Act we've seen remarkable amounts of litigation, but nobody has 13 yet met the checklist items. 14

Discriminatory conduct is especially 15 difficult to regulate, since the availability of many 16 of the needed inputs for local telephony 17 interconnection is still uncertain. Performance 18 measures that would monitor discriminatory 19 provisioning are not in place in many markets. ocs 20 stand -- OSS standards are not fully developed, and 21 access to other necessary inputs such as unbundled 22 network elements are also in doubt because of 23 24 restrictions placed on such access by the larger ILECs. 25

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All of these factors point to the ability of 1 Bell Atlantic and GTE to delay or degrade -- or to 2 deny access to the inputs ILECs need to -- CLECs need 3 4 to compete. Now, discrimination practice by one local 5 monopolist can also create secondary harm in other 6 local markets. These are called spillover effects. 7 When an RBOC currently engages in discrimination 8 against a competitive LEC, it weakens that CLEC's 9 ability and incentive to enter and compete in other 10 11 regions. So if a CLEC suffers lower quality or higher 12 costs, reduced market share, and lower profitability 13 in one region, those factors will reduce the 14 likelihood that it enters other regions, or it will 15 cause the CLEC to enter other regions at a lower scale 16 with higher prices or reduce service offerings. 17 The 18 result of these practices is less choice and higher price for consumers. 19 The Bell Atlantic/GTE merger would also 20 adversely impact competition in the interexchange 21 22 market. Approval of the merger would be harmful to 23 competition and long distance once the merged company 24 gains 271 authority. Again, while the opportunity to discriminate in the provision of access to IXCs 25

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1	currently exists, the potential for discrimination
2	will be greater upon consummation of the merger.
3	Moreover, with the merger, the amount of
4	traffic that would originate and terminate in-region,
5	that is in the combined region of the new
6	Bell Atlantic/GTE, would materially increase. Sprint
7	estimates that the new firm would terminate a weighted
8	average of 42% of minutes that it controls on the
9	originating end.
10	This represents a material increase in the
11	weighted average number of minutes that each firm
12	controls at both ends today, and the fact that
13	considerably more traffic will become in-region for
14	both ends of calls means that the merged company can
15	raise its long distance rivals' costs at both ends.
16	We believe that the merger would impede the
17	delivery of new services to the Florida market. As
18	carriers look for new and innovative ways to give
19	customers improved services, they will require access
20	to new and additional capabilities in the local
21	exchange network.
22	In Sprint's case, there's no better example
23	of this than Sprint ION, or integrated on-demand
24	network. In order to bring this new and desired set
25	of services fully to market, Sprint will need
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modifications to standard access and interconnection
 arrangements. This presents another opportunity for
 the ILEC to deny or delay services to CLECs dependent
 on the ILEC's network.

5 The merger would increase Bell Atlantic's 6 and GTE's incentives to refuse to provide 7 carrier-to-carrier services related to delivery of new 8 services like ION, because as in local and long 9 distance markets, there will be no viable choice for 10 new service providers other than the merged company.

As with CLEC and interexchange services, new services like Sprint ION absolutely need access to ILEC facilities and to interconnect with the ILEC networks. In addition to potential competitors, Florida consumers are disadvantaged in this process because they're denied the benefit of new, innovative services at competitive prices.

18 My third point is that the merger will 19 diminish the effectiveness of regulation by reducing 20 the number of available benchmarks. Under state and 21 federal law, common carriers must offer services with 22 just and reasonable terms and conditions and must not 23 engage in unjust or unreasonable discrimination in 24 their provision of services.

Similarly, ILECs are required to provide

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interconnection to other carriers on rates, terms and
 conditions that are just, reasonable and
 nondiscriminatory.

One key way that regulators can determine 4 whether common carriers are meeting their statutory 5 obligations is to compare the varying practices of 6 different carriers. This is called benchmarking, and 7 it's a powerful regulatory tool. Benchmarks aid a 8 state or federal commission in overcoming the 9 substantial asymmetry in information availability that 10 otherwise impedes effective regulation. 11

For example, benchmarking allows the Commission to better assess what practices are technically feasible to ascertain whether rates are reasonable and to scrutinize unusually poor performance and remedy it.

As the number of comparable carriers 17 18 decreases through merger, however, the Commission's 19 ability to establish and rely on benchmarks declines; 20 and as regulatory effectiveness, the risk of detection of misconduct increases, making engaging in such 21 22 misconduct less costly and, therefore, more likely. Fourth point: The Telecom Act prohibits 23 Bell Atlantic from merging with GTE, a provider of 24 interexchange services, unless and until Bell Atlantic 25

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1	has attained full Section 271 approval from the
2	Federal Communications Commission.
3	Although Bell Atlantic is currently
4	prohibited from providing in-region interexchange
5	services pursuant to Section 271 of the Telecom Act,
6	GTE already provides these services. The parties
7	assert that if Bell Atlantic has not obtained 271
8	approval before consummation of the merger, the merged
9	company will seek transitional relief from the FCC.
10	To date Bell Atlantic has failed to satisfy
11	the 271 checklist requirements in any of its
12	territories and has not obtained the requisite
13	approval from the Commission. Transitional relief
14	simply is not available under the act and,
15	accordingly, any arrangement that would continue to
16	give the merged company any interest in businesses or
17	markets that are currently foreclosed to Bell Atlantic
18	would be inconsistent with Section 271 of the act.
19	This is yet another reason merger approval should be
20	withheld.
21	Before receiving interLATA authority under
22	Section 271, no Bell operating company is allowed to
23	invest or acquire more than a 10% interest in an
24	interexchange carrier in its region. That statutory
25	prescription cannot be waived in any way,

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transitionally or otherwise. Without full divestiture
 of the forbidden businesses, the transaction is
 unlawful.

Fifth point: We also believe that the merger -- that the claim that the merger will permit the parties to enter 21 new markets is not credible and not enforceable and cannot, in any event, compensate for the anti-competitive effects of the merger.

We think that the applicants' promise of 10 entry into these new markets out of region has to be 11 viewed by the Commission with some caution. For 12 example, the parties claim that they can compete 13 effectively only for customers in their own respective 14 service -- pardon me -- the parties claim they can 15 compete effectively for customers only in their own 16 respective service areas, but that's entirely 17 inconsistent with their previous investment in 18 international and cellular division out of region. 19 Bell Atlantic has cellular properties in 20 Arizona, Georgia, New Mexico far from its interstate 21

markets through PrimeCo PCS partnership with U.S. West
and Air Touch. Bell Atlantic provides cellular
service in numerous out-of-region areas, including
Florida, Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana and six

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other states. GTE also provides cellular
 out-of-region in Tennessee.

Internationally, the applicants have 3 holdings in cellular companies and in landline 4 companies in Canada, India, New Zealand, Philippines, 5 Thailand, Venezuela and other distant countries. In 6 7 light of these successful ventures, neither 8 Bell Atlantic nor GTE can realistically claim that it lacks the resources, name brand, or expertise to 9 compete out of region without this merger. 10

GTE has also argued that it can't provide service and compete for business outside its region without first merging and obtaining Bell Atlantic's large business customer accounts and financial resources, and there are various explanations to justify why there can't be entry out of region.

Those include up-front investments, the 17 need -- that economical entry requires proximate 18 facilities which can't be economically deployed 19 without larger scale and more customers; that 20 acquiring customers is difficult without a base of 21 anchor customers; and that GTE needs a national brand; 22 and that brand name -- and the merger is needed for 23 greater brand name awareness. 24

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These justifications, however, ring hollow,

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especially in light of the empirical evidence that
 CLECs smaller than GTE are entering on precisely the
 basis that GTE claims it can't without the resources
 of Bell Atlantic.

As an initial matter, GTE's claim that it 5 needs Bell Atlantic is contrary to its own actions. 6 Before deciding to merge with Bell Atlantic, GTE 7 engaged in ongoing extensive efforts to become a 8 nationwide CLEC, and GTE has offered CLEC services in 9 eight of the 12 states identified in their 21-market 10 strategy. That includes California, Illinois, 11 Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas and 12 Washington, and GTE obtained CLEC licensing in the 13 other four states, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, and 14 15 Oregon.

In short, the competitive benefits of the merging parties' claim for merger can be largely or completely attained by GTE acting alone.

Further, other CLECs are entering local markets across the country without the benefit of a preexisting group of large customers. Small start-up enterprises lacking significant capital for up-front investments, proximate facilities, and base of anchor customers or a national brand name are nevertheless entering through a combination of independent

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1	facilities and access to ILEC facilities.
2	Nonetheless, GTE argues it can't enter unless it's
3	permitted to merge with Bell Atlantic.
4	The suggestion that GTE can't enter without
5	access to Bell Atlantic's anchor customers is also, in
6	our view, suspect. Large business customers are
7	sophisticated customers, and there's no reason to
8	believe that GTE would have a competitive handicap
9	vis-a-vis other CLECs in pursuing large businesses
10	outside GTE's in-region service area.
11	Indeed, GTE is better situated than other
12	CLECs due to its size, its experience in local
13	exchange markets, and its current ability to bundle
14	local with long distance and data services.
15	Last year, just months before its July 1998
16	merger announcement, GTE boasted of its aggressive
17	efforts to become a national out-of-region player in
18	the local exchange markets. They sought expedited
19	state regulatory approvals so they could speed new
20	services to out-of-region customers they didn't yet
21	serve, and the CLEC strategy was being aggressively
22	pursued and supported by a national advertising
23	campaign. Several months later, however, GTE would
24	have us understand that everything has changed and it
25	can no longer enter without first merging with Bell
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Atlantic.

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The parties are similarly arguing that Bell Atlantic can't follow its anchor customers into GTE's service areas without the merger.

While Bell Atlantic may not have existing 5 6 facilities in the 21 markets, none of the identified barriers, separately or in combination, has the effect 7 of precluding Bell Atlantic from pursuing its anchor 8 customers out of region. We've heard the claim that 9 Bell Atlantic's brand lacks sufficient national weight 10 to warrant pursuing the 21-market strategy alone. 11 But 12 Bell Atlantic, as the incumbent LEC provider, clearly has name brand recognition with its anchor customers, 13 who are by definition in-region companies. 14 And as I mentioned before, the larger users that are the 15 initial targets of the strategy are sophisticated 16 users who are certainly familiar with the Bell 17 18 Atlantic name.

Further, we need to consider that Bell
Atlantic's brand name is indeed a well-known and well
supported brand. In 1997 Bell Atlantic spent over
\$580 million, more than any other telecommunications
company except AT&T, on national advertising.
Nor does Bell Atlantic need GTE for its
expertise. Bell Atlantic has extensive technical

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1	capabilities and expertise in offering local exchange
2	services.
3	Essentially, the argument made by GTE and
4	Bell Atlantic that they need this enormous weight,
5	this enormous heft, boils down to a claim that a
6	carrier, even one with extensive experience offering
7	local service in region, can't compete in
8	out-of-region noncontiguous markets unless that
9	carrier unless that carrier merges with the
10	incumbent monopoly LEC or an adjacent or adjacent
11	to the targeted market.
12	That argument is anathema to the
13	procompetitive goals of the Telecom Act and the
14	Florida Statutes and is contrary to the evidence
15	regarding CLEC entry.
16	Last point: The claim that the merger will
17	advance Internet competition is, in our view, without
18	merit; and the reference in the presentation we heard
19	earlier was to both competition in the Internet and
20	for advanced data services.
21	First of all, competition in the advanced
22	data services market is intense. You look at the
23	players in that marketplace and you see AT&T, MCI
24	WorldCom, Sprint, GTE, Equant, Level 3, Qwest, IXC
25	Communications. The list goes on and on. That is a

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1 || heavily, heavily competitive market.

The Internet backbone market is also highly competitive. We heard the names of the four top players, Cable & Wireless, MCI WorldCom, Sprint and GTE, but the list goes on.

In the European Commission proceedings last 6 vear to review MCI WorldCom, GTE strongly advocated 7 that there were some 16 top tier providers of Internet 8 backbone service -- Internet backbone services, and 9 the European Commission adopted the GTE view that the 10 top tier players comprise 16 in number. So the 11 Internet backbone market is also a competitive market. 12 And the other category you look at is 13 14 Internet service providers, and of course you can 15 hardly walk down the street these days without 16 tripping over a new Internet service provider. That

17 is a marketplace in which are there are literally18 hundreds and hundreds of players.

19 So while it may well be that entering into 20 this transaction could enhance GTE's standing and its 21 own performance in Internet and data markets, this is 22 not necessary to the enhancement of competition in the 23 marketplace.

We recognize, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, that there are limits to this agency's

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1	authority to rule upon the propriety of mergers, but
2	when you look at the language of this Commission's
3	empowering statute, Chapter 364 as amended, the words
4	of the law are quite striking. The law exists, and I
5	quote, because the transition from the monopoly
6	provision of local exchange service to the competitive
7	provision of that service will require appropriate
8	regulatory oversight to protect consumers and provide
9	for the development of fair and effective competition.
10	Chapter 364 challenges you to ensure the
11	availability of the widest possible range of consumer
12	choice, to promote competition by encouraging new
13	entrants into telecommunications markets, and to
14	ensure that all providers of telecommunications
15	services are treated fairly by preventing
16	anticompetitive behavior.
17	The proposed merger runs counter to each and
18	every one of these statutory standards, and in the
19	interest of meeting these critical statutory
20	objectives, we respectfully ask the Commission to
21	address the problems with the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger
22	in front of the Federal Communications Commission and
23	to recommend to that agency that the merger be
24	disapproved.
25	Thank you.
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MS. KEATING: Unless there are any 1 questions, we were scheduled for a break at this 2 time --3 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Let me ask a question. 4 I just want to be clear. Is it your position that the 5 merger cannot take place because then Bell Atlantic 6 would be in the interLATA long distance business? 7 MR. EISENBERG: The requirements of the act 8 are that a LEC which has not met Section 271 cannot 9 acquire more than 10% of a long distance carrier. 10 COMMISSIONER CLARK: So the answer is yes? 11 12 MR. EISENBERG: Yes. COMMISSIONER CLARK: And are you pursuing 13 that with the FCC? I'm --14 MR. EISENBERG: Yes. Those are --15 **COMMISSIONER CLARK:** -- (inaudible 16 overlap) -- make that decision. Would it be the FCC 17 or us? 18 MR. EISENBERG: This is truly a legal issue, 19 and it is one that we are raising in front of the 20 Federal Communications Commission and the Department 21 22 of Justice. 23 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Okay. CHAIRMAN GARCIA: We're scheduled to take a 24 break now. 25

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That's correct, and we need to MS. KEATING: 1 go on and take it in order to get Supra's computer 2 3 presentation set up. COMMISSIONER JACOBS: Can I ask one 4 question? This is a bit different. Your concerns 5 with regard to the market power that the combined 6 company will have, is that focus primarily on their 7 service territory as opposed to those places that they 8 would operate as a CLEC? 9 MR. EISENBERG: The most direct effects are 10 where -- are in their own service -- are in their own 11 service territories. There are other secondary 12 effects, the so-called spillover effects I described 13 before, where if they deter smaller CLECs from 14 entering the market by not readily offering access to 15 16 essential -- to essential inputs, that will hurt the process of entry by those CLECs and it will provide --17 18 would result in harm in various markets, not just their own, but in markets where other incumbent LECs 19 20 are the main players. 21 COMMISSIONER JACOBS: Okay. Thank you. 22 CHAIRMAN GARCIA: All right. In the 23 interests of time, we're going to take a 10-minute break. Let's see if we can make sure we get that 24 25 computer running as quickly as possible.

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1	(Brief recess.)
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3	MS. KEATING: The next presentation is by
4	Supra Telecom.
5	MR. BUECHELE: Good afternoon,
6	Commissioners. My name is Mark Buechele and I
7	represent Supra Telecom. I'd like to introduce to you
8	Mr. Louis Bender, who is the president and chief
9	operating officer of Supra.
10	MR. BENDER: Thank you, Mark, and thank you
11	Chairman and thank you Commissioners for allowing us
12	the opportunity to present to you today.
13	I am the lead-off speaker for Supra Telecom,
14	and I will be performing the bridge for which we will
15	travel over for various parts of our presentation and
16	subsequently winding up with a proposal that we hope
17	will find yourself very interesting and in support of
18	the Commission.
19	I will start out by talking about a little
20	bit about the regulatory bodies, the background and
21	their position in the industry.
22	The government has imposed regulation on the
23	telecommunications industry for more than 125 years.
24	As the industry grew, so did the number of
25	regulations. Currently, every branch of the

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government, along with the Federal Communications
 Commission, has a say in how local and long distance
 telephone companies run their business. Thus, because
 of vast complexities surrounding the regulations, it
 can be difficult to ascertain exactly what is guiding
 the telcos and motiving lawmakers.

7 Since 1866, the telecommunication industry 8 in the United States has been subject to government 9 regulation. The rationale for control by the state 10 and federal agencies could be discovered through an 11 examination of the characteristics of the industry 12 itself.

Government intervenes in a marketplace when 13 free competition does not adequately or fairly 14 regulate the supply, price, and distribution of goods 15 or services. The nature of the telecommunications 16 industry is such that strict guidelines have been 17 deemed necessary to ensure fair business practices as 18 well as to guarantee uninterrupted service to the 19 public over a broad geographical area. 20

21 An industry is classified as a public 22 utility if it is a natural monopoly and if the public 23 is reliant on the services it provides. In a natural 24 monopoly, only a single enterprise can operate 25 efficiently in a particular market. An industry that

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supplies services essential to the public welfare, 1 services for which there is no ready substitute, is 2 said to be in the public interest. 3 The efficient operation of a telephone 4 industry certainly continues to be in the public 5 interest, although the monopolistic aspect of the 6 industry has come to be viewed quite differently in 7 recent years. 8 Regulatory agencies in general operate 9 differently today than they did in the 19th century, 10 the main difference being that in the 20th century 11 agencies have been given more power to make rules and 12 enforce them. Today regulatory bodies are referred to 13 as administrative agencies endowed by law with 14 legislative, executive, and judicial powers. 15 Because they were not granted these powers, 16 17 early regulating commissions were unable to 18 effectively perform the tasks for which they were 19 created. A brief review of the history of the U.S. 20 Congress in general followed by a look back at some events in telecommunications regulation will give us 21 22 some idea of how the latter has evolved to its present 23 state. 24 In the constitution, the basis for government regulation of certain business activities 25

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can be found in the constitution in Article 1,
 Section 8. Congress has granted the power to regulate
 commerce with foreign nations and among several
 states. This is commonly known as the Commerce
 Clause.

The power of individual states to regulate 6 commerce can be traced to the 10th Amendment of the 7 8 Constitution. The legislative preeminence of the 9 Federal Government is reemphasized in Article 6 of the Constitution which declares that the constitution of 10 laws created pursuant to our -- the supreme law of the 11 12 land, and binding in every state. The states, therefore, are permitted to make laws, including those 13 14 governing commerce, that are not in conflict with the federal laws or forbid them or the constitution of the 15 union. 16

17 Now, as we start to move to some of the acts, first, the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887. 18 In the 1860s and the 1870s the power of the national --19 20 of the nation's railroads continued to grow. 21 Accompanying this growth was the increasing number of 22 complaints from merchants, wholesalers, manufacturers, and farmers who claimed that the railroads were taking 23 24 advantage of them.

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Pressure from these groups led many states

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to pass laws to establish commissions in order to
 affect -- effort -- and to afford and regulate the
 rates of these practices of the railroads. In answer
 to the continued demand for regulation, the Interstate
 Commerce Act was passed in 1887.

6 Under this act, the Interstate Commerce 7 Commission, the ICC, was created. A five-member 8 commission, the first federally regulated agency was 9 empowered to investigate complaints and issue cease 10 and desist orders. However, the Commission did not 11 have the power.

In 1903, the Elkins Act: Because of the 12 ICC's lack of judicial power and the courts' tendency 13 to take the opposing view of many of the practices 14 they were trying to regulate, the hands of the 15 commissioners were tied. This situation was improved 16 somewhat by the passage of the Elkins Act in 1903, 17 which required railroads to adhere strictly to their 18 published rates. 19

In 1906, the Hepburn Act: A breakthrough for the ICC was the Hepburn Act. Under this act, the ICC was allowed to respond to a complaint from a shipper by fixing the rates in question subject to court review. The burden now of proof was transferred from the ICC to the railroads.

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And now into the telecommunications 1 regulations in the U.S., the Post Roads Act of 1866: 2 The regulation of telecommunications in the United 3 States began in 1866 with the passage of the Post 4 Roads Act. Under this act the Postmaster General was 5 authorized to fix rates for government telegrams. 6 This act also granted rights-of-way over public lands. 7 A provision of the act of regulated commence passed in 8 1877 empowered the ICC to order the interconnection of 9 10 the lines of the telegraph companies in the interest to better service the public. 11

12 Following that was the Radio Act of 1912 administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, 13 14 reserved certain frequencies for government use and set rules for the transmission of distress signals 15 16 from ships at sea. The act also provided for the licensing of the first radio stations. 17 And the 18 following year the ICC issued an order requiring 19 telephone companies to keep accounts records of 20 certain quidelines laid down by the Commission, which 21 then led into the Kingsbury Commitment.

In 1913, the previous and less effective
Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 was successfully
reinvoked against American Telephone & Telegraph.
Prodded by AT&T's rapid acquisition of several

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independent telephone companies and by its refusal to 1 interconnect with surviving independents, a group of 2 these companies complained to the Justice Department. 3 In response to this complaint, the Attorney 4 General informed AT&T that it appeared to be in 5 violation of the antitrust laws. To avoid an 6 antitrust suit, AT&T negotiated an agreement with the 7 Justice Department. AT&T agreed to give up -- agreed 8 to give up -- its controlling interest in Western 9 Union Telegraph Company, which it had acquired in 10 1909, and to purchase no more independent telephone 11 companies without the consent of the ICC, and to allow 12 13 independent telephone companies to interconnect with the Bell system companies. This agreement became 14 15 known as the Kingsbury Commitment after Nathan C. 16 Kingsbury, a vice-president of AT&T. Now, an interesting fact: U.S. assumes 17 control of the communications industry: 18 19 In 1918 the ultimate act of government regulation was imposed on the communications industry, 20 a complete takeover by the U.S. Post Office Department 21 of all the telephone and telegraph systems in the 22 country. The Federal Government, finding itself 23 involved in a world war, had decided that such an 24 extreme measure was necessary -- we're not 25

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recommending that today -- in the interests of
 national security.

On August 1st, 1919, the telephone systems were returned to private ownership, and the government would not repeat its action during World War II, apparently concluding that the experience of the previous war and the communications system in the country were in the safe hands of the civilians.

The Communications Act of 1934, and I think 9 we know this one fairly well: By the 1930s it had 10 been apparent that a single regulatory body was needed 11 to deal with the changing conditions in the 12 communications field. This statute created the FCC. 13 Consequently, the responsibility for regulations of 14 all interstate and international communications were 15 finally consolidated by the Communications Act of 16 1934. 17

18 The FCC, an independent government agency 19 responsible directly to commerce -- commerce -- excuse 20 me -- Congress and charged with regulating interstate and international communications by radio, telephone, 21 22 wire, and in recent years satellite and cable. To 23 carry out this mandate, the Commission has been granted by Congress a measure of administrative, 24 legislative, and judicial powers. 25

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Before a common carrier can construct or operate facilities, the carrier must obtain from the Commission a certificate of public convenience and necessary (sic). This requirement also applies if the carrier wishes to discontinue service as to the public or consolidate with or acquire facilities of another carrier.

The Commission must ensure that the proposed 8 facilities are adequate, but not excessive, and their 9 10 costs are reasonable and prudent. The FCC is not responsible for regulating intrastate communications. 11 That is the function of the state regulatory agencies. 12 Moving on to the 1949s. The U.S. sues AT&T: 13 14 In 1949 the Justice Department filed suit charging that the effective regulators -- regulations of the 15 16 telephone rates was hampered because of the high prices charged by Western Electric for equipment. 17 automatically increased by investment upon which the 18 Bell system companies were allowed to earn reasonable 19 rates. 20

After several years and a change in the administration, an agreement was finally reached in a consent degree in 1956. Under the terms of the agreement, Western Electric would not be separated from AT&T, but we -- but would be limited -- would

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limit its manufacturing operations to the type of
 equipment purchased by the Bell system and would
 refrain from entering other markets.

In 1962, satellite communications: Legislation was passed that brought space age communication technology under the FCC jurisdiction. The Communications Satellite Act provided for the establishment in cooperation with other countries of a commercial communications satellite system as part of the improved global communication network.

11 The United States participated in the system 12 through the Communications Satellite Corporation, most 13 commonly known as ComSat, a private corporation entity 14 under -- created under the act and subject to federal 15 regulations.

Moves us now into 1968; very important time. 16 The interconnect issue: Following the settlements of 17 the 1940s and '50s, the antitrust suit by the consent 18 decree, the FCC began to reexamine its policy of 19 allowing AT&T to prohibit -- prohibit -- subscribers 20 from connecting to the telephone lines any equipment 21 and any lines not supplied by the telephone company. 22 For years AT&T tariffs had clearly indicated 23

that customers' attachment of virtually all foreign
equipment was prohibited, with a telephone company

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having the right to disconnect the customers from
 connecting the equipment and even terminate their
 service altogether. The basis for this policy was a
 claim that the foreign equipment might damage the
 network.

The results was a monopoly for the telephone 6 7 companies on the supply of the equipment. The FCC change in attitude was reflected in the case of the 8 Carterfones, an inductive, acoustical device 9 manufactured by Carter Electronic Corporation, Dallas, 10 Texas, and designed to interconnect private two-way 11 radios with a telephone system by means of a base 12 13 station.

The FCC decided in June, 1968 that the Carterfone and other telephone attachments could be connected to the public telephone system, but conceded that the telephone company would be allowed to install protective equipment between the line and the foreign device.

20 Consequently, AT&T was required to file 21 revised tariffs that eliminated prohibitions against 22 the use of Carterfone devices. The Carterfone 23 decision opened the doors to increased competition in 24 the telephone industry and made it possible. A new 25 interconnect industry would become a viable,

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1	competitive force in the communications marketplace.
2	Moving on now to 1971, the specialized
3	common carriers: In this specialized common carrier
4	proceeding the FCC adopted a policy of increased
5	competition among the new common carriers in the sale
6	of data transmission and other specialized
7	communications service to the public.
8	The Commission decided that there was a
9	public need and demand for new service and diverse
10	source of supply in this area, the competition in
11	specialized service was feasible, and that the entry
12	of the new services would benefit the public.
13	The FCC also reasoned that the adverse
14	impact of the new specialized carriers and their
15	service to the public by existing carriers would not
16	outweigh the consideration for the new entry. This
17	decision allowed virtually any common carrier to enter
18	the microwave transmission field as long as certain
19	financial and technical specifications were met.
20	The first specialized common carrier to
21	initiate commercial service was Microwave
22	Communications, Inc., most commonly referred to as
23	MCI, offering voice and other services between Chicago
24	and St. Louis.
25	Now, into the '70s; 1975. The
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radiotelephony position: The FCC made a move in 1975
 to open up the mobile telephony market by reallocating
 the 806 to 946 megahertz portion of the radio spectrum
 to land-mobile communication use.

5 Later on that same year the interconnect 6 market expanded. Order from the FCC in 1975 and 1976 7 dictated that foreign equipment could be installed 8 without the intervention of a protective device --9 provided -- provided the foreign equipment was 10 certified and registered by the FCC to ensure that the 11 connecting device would not harm the network.

1974 to 1983; AT&T antitrust suit: 12 The Justice Department made a move that was to have a 13 14 tremendous impact on the communications industry. On November 20th, an antitrust division of the 15 16 U.S. Department of Justice filed a complaint that accused AT&T, Western Electric and Bell Laboratories 17 of conspiring to prevent, restrict, and eliminate 18 competition from other communications carriers, common 19 20 carriers, private telecommunications systems and 21 manufacturers and suppliers of telecommunications 22 equipment.

In violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act,
the suit asked for the divestiture of the entire stock
interest that AT&T held in its manufacturing arm,

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Western Electric, and further requested that AT&T give
 up its long distance telephone business, or retain the
 business but surrender its interest in the 22
 telephone companies, the Bell system. And we all know
 this story very well.

6 1989; another very interesting year. Price 7 caps: An extremely controversial issue is the FCC's 8 determination to change the way regulated telephone 9 companies can earn profits from the system of rate of 10 return to one of price caps. Under rate of return, 11 telcos are prohibited from earning profits above a 12 predetermined across-the-board rate of return.

Under price caps a telco is given a tariff 13 cap above which rates cannot be raised and a price 14 floor which rates cannot be dropped. Price caps allow 15 16 telcos to earn higher rates of return as long as the 17 tariffs stay within the price cap boundaries, 18 lessening the amount of regulation to the dominant carriers -- were subject to. Understandably, the 19 regulated telcos praised price caps and have pushed 20 21 for their implementation.

After that was the electromagnetic spectrum regulation. The electromagnetic spectrum regulation is easily depicted as a linear rule in which various communication allocations coexist, from very low

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1	frequency on the left of the scale to lightweight
2	frequency and fiberoptics communications on the right.
3	The FCC, Congress, the National
4	Telecommunications Information Administration, NTIA,
5	studied more efficient ways to allocate spectrum
6	frequencies. In December of 1989 the NTIA initiated
7	inquiry on the subject, taking comments from
8	interested publics from the interested public.
9	What was interesting that came out of this
10	was that the FCC adopted the FCC adopted a
11	Pioneers Preference Policy in 1991 to encourage new
12	spectrum based services and to improve old ones. The
13	Commission hoped that this policy would reduce delays
14	and risk when the FCC allocated frequencies and
15	processed licenses as well as promote innovators'
16	participation in new services or technologies they
17	helped develop. The Pioneers Preference.
18	There were several other things that
19	happened over the years, but now we're going to jump
20	right to 1996, and that's the Telecommunications Act,
21	an act to promote competition and reduce regulation in
22	order to secure lower prices and higher quality of
23	service for American telecommunication consumers and
24	encourage the rapid deployment of new technologies.
25	Commissioners, we are here today to present
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a proposal that, in words of the FCC, is bold and 1 innovative and is identical to the goals of the 2 chairman of the FCC. The regulators gave life to this 3 industry. The telcos, whether they want to believe it 4 or not, are the custodians of what is now called the 5 trust that the ratepayers built. 6 We can change the landscape of the industry 7 and provide to the users what the TA was written for. 8 I thank you. 9 MR. BUECHELE: At this time I'd like to 10 introduce Mr. Kay Ramos, the CEO and chairman of 11 Supra. 12 MR. RAMOS: Good afternoon, Commissioners. 13 Lou, First of all, I'd like to thank you 14 very much for providing us that very useful insight on 15 16 the history of this industry. According to one of the greatest historians 17 of modern time, Oliver Wendell Holmes, "When I want to 18 19 understand what is happening today, I try to decide what will happen tomorrow; I look back; a page of 20 history is worth a volume of logic." 21 Based on the brief history provided by Lou 22 23 on regulations in this industry and how it has benefited the incumbent local exchange carriers, you 24 will agree with me, Commissioners, that in our efforts 25

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to understand the behavioral pattern of the incumbent local exchange carriers and what will happen tomorrow to alternative local exchange carriers and the entire, complete landscape, we should look back and reflect on how the industry evolved to this stage. That is precisely what Lou achieved with his presentation.

Regulators made ILECs winners by providing
them with several opportunities and assisting them in
numerous ways; monopoly profits, protection of ILEC
territories, guaranteed rate of return, and regulatory
and legislative changes designed to protect incumbent
local exchange carriers.

It is, therefore, very, very ironic when I 13 hear ILECs say it is not the business of regulators to 14 pick winners. Who made them winners in the first 15 16 instance? If it is not a business of regulators to 17 pick winners, why did the merging companies apply to regulators for the approval of their mergers? Why are 18 the merging companies spending so much time and 19 fortune on lobbyists to convince regulators to approve 20 their mergers? Why are Bell Atlantic and GTE and the 21 rest of the participants here today? And they keep on 22 saying it is not a business of regulators to pick 23 winners. 24

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Commissioners, since the announcement of the

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merger of GTE/Bell Atlantic, GTE in November of last 1 year announced a reorganization program designed to 2 sell 1.5 million of its access lines in about at least 3 nine states in this country, including Texas, 4 California. The proposed merger is asking the 5 Commission to aid the larger, wealthier companies 6 establish larger markets at the expense of the ALECs' 7 current and future ability to realistically compete 8 and exist in local markets. 9

10 This pattern will continue to resume -- to 11 reduce consumer choices and competition and is not in 12 the public interest at all. The problem of CLECs is 13 not money; rather, it is having the right regulatory 14 environment to operate for the provision of 15 alternative competitive telephone service to 16 ratepayers.

Since the passage of the TA, over
\$30 billion has been invested by new entrants in the
construction of new networks, and to date they've
achieved less than 2% access line concentration.

It was very interesting today when it was mentioned, the issue of Vermont. One of our counsels, David Dimlich, and I were in Vermont last week; and in that state as of today, because of the activities of the incumbent local exchange carrier in that state,

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they have not been able to finalize the arbitration 1 proceeding on unbundled network elements pricing. So 2 what that means is that effectively there's no 3 competition in the facilities-based arena in that 4 state. And at least in that state as well, it takes 5 over 18 months to resolve complaints before the Public 6 Service Commission. 7 I and David Dimlich met with the 8 commissioner and the general counsel of the Vermont 9 10 state. It is as a result of the revolution of the 11 sole dominance of the ILECs that Congress or 12 regulators, in their wisdom, worked tirelessly on the 13 passage of the TA. The preamble of the TA -- Lou read 14 that earlier on -- without Lou -- without real 15 competition in the local markets, RBOCs have no 16 incentive to increase or improve the service offerings 17 they provide to the public. 18 Allowing the creation of a mega-BOC will do 19 nothing to encourage new or better service offerings. 20 It is a maxim that monopoly powers have less 21 improvements and change, while healthy competition 22 stimulates better product offerings. 23 At this juncture I'd like to call on 24 25 Mr. Mark Buechele to continue with Supra's

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1 presentation.

2 MR. BUECHELE: Good afternoon. My name is 3 Mark Buechele, and I represent Supra.

Supra knows that the Thank you, Mr. Ramos. 4 Telecommunications Act of 1996 did not envision the 5 continuous stream of mergers of regional Bell 6 operating companies which have taken place over the 7 past few years. Rather, the Telecommunications Act 8 envisioned that the RBOCs would actually compete 9 against each other by branching into the traditional 10 territories of each other. After all, who is in a 11 better position to compete in RBOCs' territory than 12 another RBOC. 13

As we all know, despite the promises from the RBOCs, this has not happened, and it has not happened because the RBOCs have no real incentives to break down the barriers that currently exist to competition in the local exchange markets. Of course, they ultimately benefit from these barriers.

20 Supra believes that no matter how the 21 proposed merger is characterized, the proposed merger 22 will only serve to further entrench the remaining 23 RBOCs and create further barriers to entry and free 24 competition in the local telecommunications markets. 25 With respect to competition from ALECs, it

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is clear that the Telecommunications Act has gone a 1 long way -- has a long way to go before any real 2 competition exists from ALECs. As you can see, after 3 three years since the passage of the 4 Telecommunications Act, only 2% of all access lines 5 are held by ALECs. 6 Supra, as many others, believe that the 7 RBOCs have little or no interest in competing with 8 each other; rather, they simply seek to bulk up in 9 order to further fortify their market shares and make 10 it even more difficult for competition to emerge in 11 12 the local exchange markets. Rather than compete with each other, as 13 envisioned by Congress in the Telecommunications Act, 14 15 the RBOCs have adopted a defensive strategy of 16 eliminating each other as competitors. 17 As you can see from this slide, prior to the passage of the Telecommunications Act, there were 18 seven RBOCs, with GTE being dispersed in many areas as 19 20 the remaining large ILEC. 21 As this next slide demonstrates, after the 22 first round of mergers in 1997, Bell Atlantic merged 23 with NYNEX, and Southwestern Bell merged with PacBell, 24 thus eliminating two RBOCs from the national local

25 || exchange market.

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Rather than break down barriers to 1 competition and compete with each other, the RBOCs 2 chose to eliminate two potential competitors. It 3 should be noted that during the first round of 4 mergers, certain promises were made by Bell Atlantic 5 and NYNEX directed at eliminating barriers to 6 competition. These promises were made in order to 7 persuade regulators to approve the mergers. 8 Time has revealed that little has been 9 accomplished in the way of these empty promises which 1.0 were made solely to approve the mergers. Rather --11 instead of eliminating the barriers, the parties 12 further became entrenched. 13 Our next slide reflects graphically the 14 result after the second round of mergers that are 15 currently proposed. As you can see, the elimination 16 of two more ILECs will leave only four RBOCs, 17 18 BellSouth, SBC, Bell Atlantic, and U.S. West. One can envision a next round of mergers 19 wherein the merging parties argue that for efficiency 20 reasons, SBC and U.S. West should be allowed to merge, 21 22 and Bell Atlantic and BellSouth should also be allowed 23 to merge, thus leaving only two remaining RBOCs, a Bell east and a Bell west. 24 25 At that point one can only imagine the

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remaining BOCs seeking to further consolidate into one
 local Bell company, thus coming full circle back to
 the predivestiture days.

The logic and arguments applicable to each of these future mergers will undoubtedly be the same protectural arguments offered in support of this round of mergers, with perhaps the RBOCs arguing about potential competition from the large long distance carriers in the cellular markets.

Where will these merger requests end and, more importantly, what is really driving these merger requests? Supra believes that the motivation for these merger requests is not competition, but rather a desire to fortify the competition which regulators in this country want to see in the local exchange markets.

As I was listening to Mr. Gould of GTE, I 17 wondered about the fact that both GTE and Bell 18 Atlantic are now individually larger than BellSouth 19 20 and that they still cannot enter into a BellSouth local exchange market to any significant degree. 21 If 22 GTE needs to be twice the size of BellSouth in order to compete in Miami, then does BellSouth need to be 23 twice the size of GTE in order to compete in Tampa? 24 One need not look far to find the benefits 25

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of competition. Such benefits include lower prices 1 for consumers, the deployment of new and better 2 technologies whose incentives are driven by market 3 forces, and the desire and goal of competitive 4 companies to compete for the consumer market. 5 Competition also brings new and innovative 6 ways of doing business as competitive companies look 7 to offer the better qualities of service with greater 8 levels of efficiency and at competitive prices. Such 9 market forces give companies incentives to look for 10 new and better ways of doing business, which history 11 has shown can spawn changes in society and encourage 12 growth and innovation in completely unrelated fields. 13 For example, competition in the personal 14 computer market has revolutionalized our life-styles 15 and the way we do business. Such advancements in 16 society only come at the heels of competitive markets. 17 Competition also fosters and forces 18 companies to be responsive to consumers and fill those 19 consumer needs. 20 Finally, competition creates incentives to 21 develop new markets and services, not only in a 22 23 competitive industry, but in other industries as well. 24 When competition is delayed, benefits are denied to consumers. When competition is delayed, consumers are 25

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denied the benefits which naturally flow from such
 competitive markets.

Commissioners, for the last hundred years or 3 more, competition has been delayed, stifled, and 4 denied in the telecommunications market. These 5 current round of mergers is nothing more than a tactic 6 to further stall competition in the local exchange 7 markets by bulking up against potential competition. 8 We should not turn a blind eye to the RBOCs' 9 efforts to stall competition, as such actions 10 ultimately have already had and will have negative 11 effects on our society. If we allow the RBOCs to 12 further delay competition in the local exchange 13 markets, we will be allowing these companies to deny 14 consumers and our society the benefits which flow from 15 16 real competition. At this point I'd like to turn the floor 17 over to my colleague, Dave Nilson, who will speak a 18 little bit more about the competitive benefits which 19 Supra is seeking to provide consumers within this 20 state. 21 I'd like to introduce to you Mr. Dave 22

24 operations at Supra.

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MR. NILSON: Thank you, Mark.

Nilson, who is senior vice-president of network

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Good afternoon, Commissioners. One of the primary tenets of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 is the promotion of new and innovative services to the public at competitive rates.

It is my intention to describe what Supra's 5 national new innovative services provide. Supra's 6 divestiture proposal would provide all the advantages 7 that the merger gives to GTE and Bell Atlantic, as 8 described in their joint applications, but would also 9 promote local competition and the ability for small 10 ALEC companies to provide these advanced services to 11 the public throughout the regions currently served by 12 GTE and Bell Atlantic. 13

By implementing this modification to the merger proposal, the fostering of real competition in the local telephony market would be significantly enhanced.

One of the primary concerns that such a 18 merger as this must raise is the impact that it would 19 cause to the consumer, not to the large business 20 customers, but the residential and small business 21 22 Supra's plan would allow the benefits of customers. competition to be felt not only by large businesses, 23 but also by residential and small business customers 24 who comprise the bulk of all telecommunications users. 25

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Not until the emergence of full 1 facilities-based competition in this marketplace will 2 Supra's national new innovative services and the 3 reduced prices envisioned by the Telecommunications 4 Act of 1996 ever materialize. The introduction of the 5 Telecommunications Act --6 I'm sorry. I missed COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: 7 your last statement. Over here. You said not until 8 9 what? MR. NILSON: Not until the emergence of full 10 facilities-based competition in this marketplace will 11 12 Supra's new national innovative services and the reduced prices envisioned by the Telecommunications 13 Act of 1996 ever materialize. 14 The introduction of the Telecommunications 15 Act of 1996 specifically states its purpose; to 16 promote competition and reduce regulation in order to 17 secure lower prices and higher quality services for 18 American telecommunications consumers and encourage 19 the rapid deployment of new telecommunications 20 technologies. 21 Supra not only will provide lower prices and 22 higher quality services, but will also be offering 23 many new telecommunications technologies as described 24 in our innovative services strategy. Some of these 25

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services --

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3	question, kind of going back to the point that you
4	made about not until you have full facilities-based
5	competition will we be able to receive the benefits
6	that Supra would have to offer.

7 What about the merger will prevent 8 facilities-based competition from occurring?

9 MR. NILSON: The point -- the point of my 10 topic here is to describe those services that we are 11 offering to consumers, and as you'll see as we go 12 through the discussion, that there is an element of 13 critical mass essential to be able to deploy services 14 on a wide scale area to be -- to reach maximum benefit 15 to all consumers.

16It's the same type of critical mass that the17larger companies have been talking about this18afternoon, and I'd like to make some points regarding19how that plays into some of the new and modern20services that we're indicating are part of our21proposal.22COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I understand.

23 Mr. Ramos, did you want to -- I don't think your mike
24 is on, though.

MR. RAMOS: Yes. Thank you very much for

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1	that question, Commissioner Johnson.
2	You recall earlier on that Mr. Geoffrey
3	Gould of GTE stated the benefits of the major proposal
4	of Bell Atlantic/GTE has mentioned about six different
5	benefits, and also stated that it was very difficult
6	for them when GTE tried to compete as a CLEC in other
7	states, in other outside their service territories.
8	And he mentioned one particular point; that
9	the resale business is not profitable in any way
10	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Right.
11	MR. NILSON: And that's why GTE had to pull
12	out of that resale business.
13	Now for Supra, what we are trying to say
14	here and emphasize here is the fact that without Supra
15	having the critical mass and actually being
16	facilities-based, we will not be able to provide
17	consumers with the benefits of our new national
18	innovative services. So
19	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And that I
20	understand that. And sometimes I you know,
21	thinking about competitors and how individuals can
22	penetrate the market and what is the real problem, and
23	oftentimes the whole issue of economy of scale and the
24	capital cost and the investments that have to be made
25	to make this things work and I think you're
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1	absolutely right with respect to there needs to be
2	massive penetration and you need to have the ability
3	to deploy your facilities, but what about this why
4	does this merger stop or stifle your ability to build
5	facilities?
6	MR. BUECHELE: If I may just add a little
7	bit. The bigger they are, the worse they become.
8	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: But can regulators
9	is it regulation that's I mean, could regulation
10	assist in that effort?
11	MR. BUECHELE: Well
12	MR. RAMOS: Before you go on, sir,
13	commissioner Johnson, first of all, the question you
14	asked me about the fact that how will this merger
15	stifle that ability to deploy the network, let me
16	answer that question.
17	This Commission will recall that since
18	January last year Supra Telecommunications has been in
19	front of this Commission at least on four different
20	occasions trying to establish cases against another
21	incumbent local exchange carrier in Florida on
22	physical collocation, on unbundled network elements,
23	on just a host of OSS, a host of things.
24	Now, the same problems that we're having
25	right now with that incumbent local exchange carrier
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1	is the same problem that we know that we are going to
2	have with GTE, and I will say I will tell you why.
3	Sometime ago last year we had a meeting with
4	GTE trying to establish an interconnection agreement
5	with GTE, and at that meeting the GTE lead negotiator
6	specifically told me that GTE will fight to any extent
7	about physical collocation of switching equipment
8	because we that GTE would not allow Supra to
9	collocate its switching equipment, because allowing
10	Supra to collocate its switching equipment will give
11	Supra the ability to take away GTE's customers very
12	quickly.
13	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And I think I
14	understand your argument. I think I understand the
15	
15	point that you were trying to make, but it still
16	point that you were trying to make, but it still strikes me that part of the problem and the issues
16	strikes me that part of the problem and the issues
16 17	strikes me that part of the problem and the issues that you've had, perhaps some of the solutions may be
16 17 18	strikes me that part of the problem and the issues that you've had, perhaps some of the solutions may be in the regulatory if we didn't allow this merger,
16 17 18 19	strikes me that part of the problem and the issues that you've had, perhaps some of the solutions may be in the regulatory if we didn't allow this merger, you're going to still have these problems.
16 17 18 19 20	strikes me that part of the problem and the issues that you've had, perhaps some of the solutions may be in the regulatory if we didn't allow this merger, you're going to still have these problems. You're just going to have one less big
16 17 18 19 20 21	<pre>strikes me that part of the problem and the issues that you've had, perhaps some of the solutions may be in the regulatory if we didn't allow this merger, you're going to still have these problems. You're just going to have one less big provider to deal with, so that still doesn't get to</pre>
16 17 18 19 20 21 22	<pre>strikes me that part of the problem and the issues that you've had, perhaps some of the solutions may be in the regulatory if we didn't allow this merger, you're going to still have these problems. You're just going to have one less big provider to deal with, so that still doesn't get to the underlying problems you've raised of whether it's</pre>
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	<pre>strikes me that part of the problem and the issues that you've had, perhaps some of the solutions may be in the regulatory if we didn't allow this merger, you're going to still have these problems. You're just going to have one less big provider to deal with, so that still doesn't get to the underlying problems you've raised of whether it's collocation, whether it's interconnection, whether</pre>

still -- what you're saying in some of the issues that 1 you're raising relate to our job, what we should be 2 doing, that we should maybe have a more expedited 3 process, that we should be trying to help the parties 4 resolve their -- their issues in a more expeditious 5 manner, because just denying this particular merger 6 won't get you there because you still have the other 7 providers to deal with. 8

9 Maybe it's -- like I said, maybe it's one 10 less giant to deal with, but the underlying issues 11 that you all appear to be raising appear to be issues 12 that are within our regulatory authority and our 13 oversight.

And maybe not in this forum, but some other 14 forum, you can continue to tell us what we could do 15 differently to help the CLECs enter the market and 16 what we could do to ensure that you have access to the 17 central offices or that you have an unbiased forum to 18 deal with interconnection and those kind of things so 19 that you can continue to develop your networks and 20 deploy the infrastructure in a way that will provide 21 for a more competitive market. 22

But it strikes me that some of the things that you all are saying relate directly to the Commission and us trying to do a better job at

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performing our regulatory responsibilities to open up
those markets.

3 MR. RAMOS: Ma'am, let me just take you back 4 one step, ma'am, before I kind of like respond to what 5 you have said.

You recall that during the course of the 6 Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger in '96, and by '97, some of 7 '97 when the FCC first of all gave its opinion on that 8 merger, the FCC said, no, that that merger was not 9 going to be approved, because you had the merging 10 companies come up and say we're going to merge; and 11 then you had AT&T, MCI WorldCom, Sprint saying that, 12 no, these companies are not going to merge. 13

And the companies, Bell Atlantic and NYNEX 14 came back a week after the first of -- the FCC denied 15 16 it, first of all -- came back with a middle ground position; and that middle ground position that it came 17 back with at that time was to make promises to the FCC 18 on the OSS, on unbundled network elements, on 19 reporting performances and things like that. They 20 made those promises. 21

And based on those promises that they made, that middle ground promises, the FCC approved the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX at that time. Now, because of this merger itself now, Bell

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Atlantic, GTE, Southwestern Bell and Ameritec
 announced their merger intentions last year. AT&T,
 Sprint, MCI WorldCom, they are all opposed to the
 merger again now.

5 At this point now, what has happened? Supra 6 has come up with a middle ground position saying that 7 before the merger, these mergers are approved, some 8 divestiture should be placed as a condition in 9 accordance with Section 214(c) of the Communications 10 Act. That allows the regulators to place such 11 conditions on mergers.

And why are we saying that? Because once you put these companies together, like Bell Atlantic/NYNEX that was put together in '97, it is impossible for regulators to go back and pull these companies apart, because they've been put together.

Now, conditions that's -- will actually be 17 implemented before the mergers are allowed to occur 18 are what Supra is talking about, which is the issue of 19 asking them to divest some of their central office 20 assets; not to Supra, but to all of the ALECs that are 21 interested, small and medium sized ALECs. So that 22 that way the whole purpose of the merger will now be 23 able to serve the public interest benefits of all 24 this, and then ALECs will have the critical mass to 25

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They will be able to have central offices of OSS. 1 their own. They will also be able to have customers 2 and the rest of the things that they need to compete. 3 And then the RBOCs, the incumbent LECs, if 4 they want to compete in those central offices 5 belonging to those ALECs, will have to now also walk 6 their way back to the ALECs and negotiate fair terms 7 8 with these companies. And I guess -- is 9 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: this the gentlemen that's also going to talk about the 10 11 conditions that should be imposed? MR. RAMOS: Yes, ma'am, Mark Buechele. 12 I will talk a little bit more MR. BUECHELE: 13 about that a little later. 14 MR. RAMOS: Yes. 15 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. And so that 16 17 would be your focus, and I guess you're stating what we should do in the FCC filing, then, would be to 18 support the conditions that you all are suggesting 19 should be --20 MR. BUECHELE: Yes, a divestiture 21 proposal --22 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And then to the 23 extent that they, the FCC, were to require the 24 divestiture, then the merger could go through, but --25

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1	MR. BUECHELE: That would
2	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: it would be under
3	circumstances that would allow for companies like
4	yours to have the facilities that they would need in
5	order to compete.
6	MR. BUECHELE: Yes; because the last mile is
7	the most important part. And when you spread the
8	assets around, then you that's the only way you
9	really jump start competition is by spreading it
10	around to a lot of people.
11	COMMISSIONER CLARK: Can I ask a question?
12	Do you know when if the two companies merge, what
13	percentage of access lines would they have?
14	MR. BUECHELE: Fabio, if you'll go back to
15	that slide, I think it's
16	COMMISSIONER CLARK: Well, I saw the
17	numbers. I don't know the percentage. I can't figure
18	out the percentage.
19	MR. RAMOS: I think roughly, ma'am, I
20	think about 32, 33%.
21	COMMISSIONER CLARK: Okay.
22	MR. RAMOS: Yes, ma'am. Bell Atlantic/GTE
23	is going to end up with a total of the total asset
24	lines. The same thing with SBS/Ameritec; they are
25	going to end up with a total of the asset lines as
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1	well.
2	COMMISSIONER CLARK: But you say 22 and 40,
3	which will result in 62, that will give them a third
4	of the access lines.
5	MR. BUECHELE: Yeah, approximately
6	MR. RAMOS: Yes, a total (inaudible
7	overlap)
8	COMMISSIONER CLARK: Okay.
9	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I'm going to have to
10	leave, and I'll have the benefit of the court
11	reporter's notes as long as we all speak slowly,
12	because she's having a problem recording all of it;
13	and I apologize, too.
14	One question, sir, that you may want to, if
15	you could for my benefit, address. I remember and
16	I can't think of the company, I think it was LCD, the
17	company that Ann Binghamton worked for, they had a
18	proposal early on that the local exchange companies be
19	required to kind of divest themselves of the local
20	loop and that they offer those services through a
21	separate subsidiary. Are you familiar with that
22	proposal
23	MR. RAMOS: Yes, I'm very familiar with
24	that
25	COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: maybe that can
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just -- just comment on that and why your approach to 1 divesting assets is better than that one. 2 MR. BUECHELE: Well, because --3 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I just -- I have to 4 leave right now, and I know I'm getting you all out of 5 6 order, but when you make your presentations on the conditions, that will be helpful if you just, you 7 know --8 MR. BUECHELE: Well, I can --9 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: -- have some 10 articulation on that issue too --11 MR. BUECHELE: I can give you something real 12 quick. A subsidiary is just that; it's controlled by 13 the parent. 14 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Well, maybe they said 15 a separate affiliate completely. I don't know if it 16 was a --17 MR. BUECHELE: Affiliates are --18 19 MR. RAMOS: Subsidiary -- (inaudible 20 overlaps) --MR. BUECHELE: -- the same people. 21 22 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. MR. BUECHELE: It's like nepotism; a son or 23 daughter working for a parent. You're always going to 24 get favoritism, and it's not going to work. 25

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1COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.2That was short and easy. I look forward to reading3your comments.

4 MR. NILSON: I'll continue with the
5 description of the new and innovative services covered
6 by this proposal.

A listing of those services are free
advertiser supported voice nail, network-wide free
messaging, voice bulletin board service, universal
service messaging, high bandwidth interconnections for
schools, DSL services, urban services in rural areas,
realtime subscriber configurable features, and flat
rate, unlimited long distance between subscribers.

Now I'll go into a little more detail on 14 each one of these proposals. For free advertiser 15 supported voice mail, taking a cue from the Internet, 16 Supra has created a radically new model for providing 17 18 Internet voice mail services to its subscribers. By playing a short 7-second advertisement to subscribers 19 20 before retrieving their messages, subscribers can 21 receive cost-free call answering.

The benefit to all subscribers, regardless of their income level is obvious. Currently the acceptance of voice mail in the market is dismally low. The cost of the service itself and the cost of

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the separate features needed to activate the service
 make the purchase of a user-owned answering machine
 very attractive, especially to cost conscious
 consumers. Once again, we are not recommending that
 here today.

Even without the additional services
required, the \$6.90 per month paying the price for
voice mail would cost each consumer \$83.40 per year.
A consumer could buy a new answering machine every
year and still save money.

11 Currently the residential presentation of 12 voice mail systems is very low; 12.5% for Bell 13 Atlantic, and a low 8.2% for GTE. This proves that 14 the current voice mail paradigm is not being accepted 15 by the majority of the subscribers.

We offer a different paradigm; one that will 16 both be superior and cost-effective compared to a user 17 purchased answering machine or a privately maintained 18 voice mail system. Yet the voice mail service is far 19 easier to use, has no user maintenance, and boasts a 20 very high retention rate among consumers who have 21 22 tried it. By offering it at no cost, we expect the penetration of this feature to be the highest in the 23 24 market.

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For network-wide free messaging services, we

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indicate that in addition to the basic call answering function, our voice mail platform will also allow free messaging between all Supra subscribers. Instead of calling acquaintances, a subscriber can log into their mailbox and leave a message to another subscriber free of charge.

7 This will further reduce the long distance 8 charges the customers currently have to pay and 9 encourage new subscribers to the service. Voice 10 services once again will be revived.

Penetration into GTE and Bell Atlantic locations can only serve to further increase subscriber value of this feature. Currently only computer literate, Internet savvy people are able to take advantage of nonusage-sensitive messaging service using e-mail services.

17 This service will bring the same capability to all consumers with or without a computer and 18 provide the advantages of actual audio messaging as 19 well. The importance of this feature to nontechnical, 20 low income consumers cannot be overemphasized. These 21 22 are the very kinds of services that the Telecommunications Act of 1996 envisioned. 23 Voice bulletin board services provide a 24 service that Internet users have long enjoyed; the 25

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advantages of topic based news groups. These threaded
 message areas offer a vast array of topics on subjects
 ranging from automotive repair to child rearing
 service.

Supra proposes a service which will allow 5 6 similar topic based discussions among those without a computer or Internet access. With nothing more than a 7 standard telephone, Supra subscribers will be able to 8 listen and respond to topic based messages. These 9 services will be monitored so the messages will remain 10 on topic and appropriate to the subject. Once again, 11 12 the national footprint that a presence in the Bell Atlantic and GTE region would stimulate community 13 bulletin boards and electronic communities that we've 14 all heard so much about in recent presidential 15 elections that simply do not exist with any provider 16 at the present. 17

The universal service messaging service seeks to provide a common method of access for the three main types of messaging consumers currently must deal with; fax, voice mail, and e-mail. Currently the only devices capable of properly handling all three types of messages are a multimedia-enabled computer or enhanced voice mail systems.

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The ILECs are prohibited at this time from

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providing enhanced services, such as Internet access,
 except through separate subsidiaries. Because of
 this, they are constrained from providing seamless
 universal service messaging solutions. Supra,
 however, has no such constraint. Yet universal
 messaging, while highly desired by many consumers,
 remains largely unavailable.
 The reason is clearly the lack of

8 The reason is clearly the lack of 9 penetration by competition into the residential 10 community. A significant change must be made to the 11 current system if this sort of service is ever to 12 reach consumers, and the proposed divestiture of GTE 13 and Bell Atlantic central offices will provide that 14 needed impetus.

We talk about high speed Internet access for schools. By constructing an ATM and frame relay backbone intersecting all 60 Supra central office markets, Supra will be able to provide precisely tailored bandwidth to areas often ignored by the RBOCs; schools and rural areas.

No longer is there a need to limit these
telephone customers to available service. The ATM
backbone allows precise tailoring of high performance
bandwidth to each customer in a cost-effective manner.
No longer is it necessary for schools to suffer

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1	limited bandwidth because the next increment is just
2	too large or expensive to deliver.
3	One must only look at the unfulfilled
4	promises of the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger to provide
5	such services to schools to realize that premerger
6	conditioning is required to assure our children
7	receive the promise this time. Supra's network can
8	deliver this promise in a reliable and cost-effective
9	manner; by design.
10	Without I'm going to talk about DSL
11	services. And without going into technical details,
12	DSL is high speed access. When used for Internet
13	access, it has received a lot of attention in the
14	press, and yet it, too, remains illusive to the
15	consumer.
16	The reasons are numerous, but one of the
17	most significant is the difficulty that Internet
18	service providers have in obtaining access to clean
19	copper wires from their Internet hubs to the consumer.
20	Access to the central office and a copper path becomes
21	a crucial factor in deploying this service.
22	The RBOCs cannot deliver Internet services
23	directly except through a subsidiary. Although
24	enhanced services subsidiaries must pay their RBOC
25	parents as if they were located two miles from the

central office, the simple fact remains that they are
 not, and thus enjoy the technical benefits of being
 able to provide DSL services to a much wider customer
 base.

5 Allowing Supra to purchase a percentage of 6 these central offices will spur real competition for 7 DSL services, the potential of which is enormous. 8 While DSL will primarily be used for access to the 9 Internet, it can deliver high speed access for many 10 other new and innovative services.

Among these services are linking rural businesses to larger urban offices, support for SOHO, small office, home office or other telecommuting applications, medical transfer of X-ray documents, and high speed video transmission for distance learning. DSL is a high speed service of the future that is ready to deploy today.

Urban services in rural areas have often
been ignored. The ATM backbone mentioned earlier
makes it possible to deliver full urban phone feature
CLASS services, voice mail, even CENTREX based PBX
services, cost-effectively to rural areas.
No longer is it necessary for a rural or

24 small business to sound like a small business or 25 apologize for awkward access to its employees.

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Central office based CENTREX PBX services and voice 1 mail give all phone customers the ability to 2 cost-effectively present a Fortune 100-like 3 presentation on their phone services. 4 In a survey of small business owners, these 5 two services were the two most desired additions to 6 subscriber phone services. The survey also showed 7 that these subscribers all believed there was a need 8 for them to purchase, install and maintain the 9 hardware necessary to deliver these services. 10 That investment both in hardware, training, 11 and maintenance repeated over and over again was the 12 number one reason these services had not been deployed 13 by the surveyed customers. 14 Supra's central office based services 15 delivered to all customers would eliminate this, and 16 with one low monthly charge increase the prestige of 17 the small business owner. 18 One of the impediments to offering truly 19 innovative services by telephone companies to their 20 subscribers has been the difficulty of implementing 21 changes and new feature offerings. With new 22 technology and the growing acceptance in the use of 23 the Internet, however, these services can now be 24 25 administered and modified directly by the advanced

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consumer without any interaction with a customer
 service representative.

As only one example, time-of-day sensitive call blocking features which require management of lists of phone numbers and time-of-day schedules have not even been offered to residential consumers by the ILECS simply because management of them is too complex via the telephone and too costly via service prepresentatives.

We will offer a single, intuitive web page interface to provide these services easily and immediately to our subscribers. We will also continue to identify, define and create new services for our subscribers.

Unlimited long distance between Supra 15 subscribers is a fundamental benefit of the ATM 16 backbone mentioned earlier. Due to the inherent 17 efficiencies of the ATM backbone and the control it 18 allows Supra over the provisioning of backbone 19 bandwidth, we will be offering unlimited long distance 20 service to our customers for one low flat rate monthly 21 22 price.

23 Supra customers may call each other without 24 the worry of per minute charges adding up. This gives 25 the consumer market unparalleled advantage over the

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1	current situation. Additionally, long distance calls
2	from Supra customers to customers of other phone
3	companies will be billed at permitted rates currently
4	unheard of in the industry.
5	This one-two punch is directly aimed at
6	reducing the cost of long distance rates to the
7	residential and small business market. This reduction
8	in these services are exactly what the
9	Telecommunications Act of 1996 sought to create.
10	In conclusion
11	COMMISSIONER JACOBS: Excuse me. What
12	impact are you foreseeing by the merger in your
13	ability to provide those kinds of interexchange
14	services?
15	MR. NILSON: The unlimited flat rate long
16	distance will be offered to Supra customers calling
17	other Supra customers by increasing the geographic
18	area covered due to by the method of divestiture of
19	central office facilities
20	COMMISSIONER JACOBS: Are you going to be
21	are those going to be your lines, or are you going to
22	be leasing facilities
23	MR. RAMOS: Maybe if I can answer the
24	question on our behalf.
25	Sir, you recall that when America On Line

started its business, the Internet business, the first 1 thing it did was they were charging subscribers, their 2 customers, for the e-mail. Eventually e-mail became 3 free on the Internet. AOL was the first company to 4 spearhead on that, to spearhead the free e-mail. 5 And the point is that AOL created what is 6 called an AOL community whereby if, for instance, the 7 father is in New York and the son is in Miami, they 8 can send e-mails to each other and receive them sort 9 of realtime and then be able to correspond that way. 10 Now, if Supra is able to achieve the 11 critical mass that it requires by having central 12 offices geographically spread all over the United 13 14 States, our subscribers will be able to call 15 themselves flat fee/long distance, at a much cheaper 16 rate than what is currently being charged. That is 17 the message that we are trying to send. 18 COMMISSIONER JACOBS: So you would need to -- so the traffic would flow through your central 19 20 offices. That's correct --21 MR. RAMOS: MR. BUECHELE: I think part of the 22 Yes. problem is the access charges would make this kind of 23 thing infeasible. 24

COMMISSIONER JACOBS: And your contention is

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that with the further consolidation that -- those --1 the level of access charges really becomes more of 2 a -- under the control of those prevailing companies, 3 I would say. 4 MR. RAMOS: Yes, sir, that's very correct 5 sir; because even if you look at the GTE territory, 6 GTE is one company that is not subjected to 7 Section 271 filing. 8 Because of that particular reason, we have 9 found and our experience is such that we found that 10 GTE is uncooperative. They are very, very 11 uncooperative, and it's because -- you know, and I 12 don't blame them. They are not subject to 271 filing. 13 And the point -- the message we're trying to 14 send across is that before these companies are allowed 15 to merge, before they are allowed to put themselves 16 together, regulators should seize this opportunity 17 once again -- because during the course of the Bell 18 19 Atlantic/NYNEX merger, that one is gone. It's lost. That one is gone. You can't break up those two 20 companies again. Then also you had SBC/PacBell. You 21 22 had SBC/PacBell/SNET. That also is -- all those 23 opportunities are all gone. So right now we have only five RBOCs left, 24 and by the time they finish -- complete this round of 25

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1	mergers, you're going to end up with only four RBOCs.
2	And during the course of the BellAtlantic/NYNEX
3	merger, one of the things that the Bell Atlantic
4	expert witness wanted the FCC to enter into the record
5	is the fact that the FCC and regulators would not be
6	opposed to the recombination of the original Bell
7	operating companies. And FCC said no. The FCC
8	declined that particular request. It's it's in the
9	Bell Atlantic/NYNEX order.
10	COMMISSIONER JACOBS: Thank you.
11	MR. NILSON: With that I'll conclude because
12	Mr. Ramos quite effectively delivered my conclusion
13	for me.
14	I'd like to introduce Mr. Richard Smith,
15	vice-president of marketing for Supra Telecom.
16	MR. SMITH: I'd like to just back up
17	briefly.
18	We have all witnessed the revolution in
19	telecommunications technology in this aptly named
20	information age. However, the benefits to consumers
21	have been more evolutionary. Consumers are demanding
22	more than ever new services, price performance and
23	simplicity. Never before have better, faster, cheaper
24	meant so much to so many.
25	Before we move forward, let's have a brief
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overview of recent history from the consumers' 1 perspective. I'm a veteran of the long distance 2 market, having 22 years with AT&T. 3 The divestiture of the Bell system in 1984 4 enabled competition. Fifteen years ago consumers 5 finally began getting a choice. Most of us here today 6 will remember what long distance pricing was like; 7 complex rate schedules with three time-of-day calling 8 periods, distance sensitive pricing, full minute 9 rounding, et cetera. 10 Calls from Tallahassee to California were 11 more than calls to Georgia. Calls after 5:00 p.m. 12 were less than calls during business hours, but more 13 than after 11:00; and if you talked for three minutes 14 and one second, you paid for four minutes. 15 Today we all know this has dramatically 16 The bottom line: Consumers make simpler 17 changed. choices with savings upwards of 50% from days gone by. 18 What made this possible? Competition. 19 Cellular has taken a parallel course. Until 20 recently, roaming charges, complex rate plans with 21 time-of-day pricing, expensive minimum monthly fees, 22 and rounding up were the standard. Air time of 23 59 cents, 49 cents, 39 cents were all common. 24 Consumers had to make a rather large investment in the 25

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phone itself. It was an up-scale market and a status 1 2 symbol. Now phones are affordable. Flatter rate 3 claims, free weekends, no roaming, and even 10 cents a 4 minute is a reality with more to come. Cellular 5 phones are now commonplace and are no longer just a 6 luxury product. It is more for convenience, moving 7 for some to necessity. We all know why. Competition. 8 It is now time to move forward, not only in 9 this discussion, but in the industry. 10 It was shown earlier that local competition 11 after three years has yielded only 2% market share to 12 the new entrants. If we were to look more closely, 13 the majority of the 2% are to larger business 14 customers. Further investigation would show 15 facility-based competition to consumers is virtually 16 nonexistent. 17 Supra Telecom defines consumer market as one 18 to six lines. This includes both residential and 19 small business customers. This is Supra's target 20 market and the thrust of our business plan. 21 22 In the Yankee Group White Paper, Volume 14, No. 8, May 1997, on Page 8, and I quote, "To 23 residential consumers, including small business: The 24 expectation for local competition is that it will 25

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bring simplicity and lower prices. Simplicity will 1 come from dealing with one company for both local and 2 long distance service." 3 The Yankee Group's Technologically Advanced 4 Family -- or TAF -- survey indicates that 67.4% of 5 6 households would be interested in dealing with a single provider for telecommunications services. 7 Utilizing information from the Common 8 9 Carrier Bureau, the Yankee Group, strategists, and 10 other industry groups, we have determined the 11 expenditure patterns of telecommunications consumers. 12 Consequently, we have designed products and service offerings that would save them a considerable amount 13 of money as well as offer advanced, new, innovative 14 service. 15 16 According to the Yankee Group report, 62% of 17 that same TAF survey, that one-stop shopping is of 18 primary importance to them. It is our desire to serve 19 that segment of the market, and we have designed 20 products to fit their needs. The consumer market accounts for over 85% and 72% of the total access 21 lines and revenues, respectively, of the phone 22 companies. That's incumbent LECs and IXCs in the 23 United States. 24 25 To meet this demand, Supra telecom's product

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1	mix will comprise feature-rich bundled packages with
2	flat rate pricing, local, long distance and Internet
3	capability delivered to meet consumers' needs.
4	Features and free voice mail will be the standard.
5	All of this can be delivered for over half the price
6	of comparable services; simple and on one bill.
7	In conclusion, it is incumbent upon
8	regulators and innovative providers like Supra Telecom
9	to bring the vision of TA of '96 to fruition for all
10	consumers as we build the bridge for competition into
11	the 21st century. Let the revolution begin; better,
12	faster cheaper. Keep it simple, Supra.
13	Thank you.
14	MS. KEATING: Commissioners I just want to
15	point out that in view of the time, AT&T has got
16	their presenter needs to catch a flight, and I got a
17	feeling earlier on that Supra wanted to go a little
18	bit further. They've gone a good bit over the hour
19	that was allotted to them. So I would suggest that we
20	
20	go ahead and take AT&T's presentation at this time.
21	go ahead and take AT&T's presentation at this time. COMMISSIONER DEASON: I thought Supra's
21	COMMISSIONER DEASON: I thought Supra's
21 22	COMMISSIONER DEASON: I thought Supra's presentation was finished at this point.
21 22 23	COMMISSIONER DEASON: I thought Supra's presentation was finished at this point. MR. BUECHELE: No. We would we could

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Well, you've already 1 utilized more than your allocated time. What flight 2 does the AT&T --3 5:30. MS. KEATING: 4 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Maybe what we should do 5 is take AT&T and the next one, and then if we have 6 time, we'll come back to Supra. 7 MS. KEATING: AT&T is the last presentation. 8 Then we allotted a few minutes for discussion. Now, 9 if you'd like for Supra to come back up after AT&T --10 COMMISSIONER DEASON: We'll proceed. We'll 11 go ahead and take AT&T, and then we'll revert back to 12 the conclusion of Supra's presentation, assuming that 13 14 time permits. MS. MERRITT: First, I'd like to say thank 15 you for taking us out of order, and I apologize to 16 Supra that we had to cut in the middle of their 17 18 presentation here. But I would like to introduce Mr. John 19 Gardner who is our vice-president for federal affairs. 20 He's based out of Washington D.C., and I will let 21 Mr. Gardner move forward. 22 MR. GARDNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and 23 Commissioners. Thank you for holding this hearing 24 today. 25

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I want to begin by commending you for 1 focusing squarely on the effect of this proposed 2 merger competition, an approach in accord with the 3 1996 Telecom Act. 4 As a consequence of the act, it is clear 5 that both state and federal policy makers are charged 6 with the task of affirmatively promoting competition 7 in the provision of local exchange telephone service. 8 As the FCC has noted, quote, "The Telecom Act makes it 9 clear that the public interest standard embodies a 10 policy structure designed to promote more competition 11 12 and deregulation." FCC Chairman Kennard stated in the en banc 13 hearing of last December that, quote, "For me, the 14 single most important question on my mind is really 15 quite simple, and that is, how will each of these 16 mergers benefit American consumers?" 17 He wanted to know how past Bell operating 18 company mergers have affected competition and service 19 20 quality and whether promises to regulators have been 21 kept. On the national level it remains painfully 22 clear that the act's central objective of meaningful 23 local exchange competition and choice for customers 24 has not been realized, in large measure because of 25

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1	significant resistance waged by the incumbent local
2	exchange carriers. Almost all local access lines in
3	the United States remain under their direct control.
4	Of particular importance to the proposed
5	merger of Bell Atlantic and GTE, the entry process has
6	been further deterred by the entrenched and
7	potentially growing incentive and ability of ILECs to
8	engage in strategic measures designed to foreclose the
9	entry of new competitors.
10	And this merger would provide even greater
11	pools of access and other monopoly profits from which
12	to entrench bottleneck monopolies. If both proposed
13	RBOCs mergers are ultimately approved, it could well
14	establish a market structure in which the nation's
15	access lines may be largely divided between, in
16	effect, a Bell east and a Bell west.
17	Thus, against the backdrop of a public
18	policy designed to enable competition, a merger
19	between two of the largest monopoly providers of
20	telecommunications services in the United States is
21	inherently suspect.
22	In studying this merger, I believe the
23	Commission should ask whether there would be a
24	positive impact. To obtain approval at the national
25	level, Bell Atlantic and GTE must show that their

merger would serve the public interest by enhancing
 competition.

3	This view is shared by a number of state
4	public utility commissions. Most recently, according
5	to published reports, the staff of the Public
6	Utilities Commission of Ohio a state like Florida
7	where Bell Atlantic does not provide service but GTE
8	does wrote that, quote, "The merger must do more
9	than hold the public harmless or simply maintain the
10	status quo. The public must be better off after the
11	merger. Staff believes the application, as it
12	currently stands, does not demonstrate how the public
13	would be better off."
14	This proposed merger fails the required
15	public interest and pro-competition standards of
16	federal law. It would have serious adverse
17	consequences for the development of local phone
18	competition in Florida.
19	Our comments identify four principal reasons
20	for denying the merger. First: It would only further
21	impede efforts to open to competition the monopoly
22	markets.
23	Second: It would violate Section 271 of the
24	Telecommunications Act of 1996.
25	Third: It would produce no countervailing

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pro-consumer benefits.

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Fourth, and finally: Bell Atlantic's response to the merger conditions imposed by the FCC in connection with its acquisition of NYNEX precludes approval.

6 I encourage you to consider these four 7 problems in light of both economic theory and the 8 Florida evidence, and provide to the FCC and the 9 U.S. Department of Justice at the earliest possible 10 opportunity the data that demonstrates the adverse 11 consequences.

12 The Department of Justice takes a more 13 limited but still crucial examination of these 14 mergers. The antitrust division could be interested, 15 for instance, in evidence that competition could be 16 harmed through effective partitioning of markets.

As Assistant Attorney General Joel Klein has 17 stated, in the markets of the future, particularly 18 high tech markets, interconnectivity will be crucially 19 important. This is important, not only on a technical 20 level, but an economic level as well. The Department 21 wants to avoid in telecommunications the situation 22 which some observers believe effectively exists in the 23 airline industry, in which there is competition at a 24 national level, but local markets are frequently 25

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1 || subject to dominance by one carrier.

This pending merger poses the danger of 2 reinforcing local dominance and slowing the 3 development of effective competition. We know that 4 incumbent local monopolies engage in subtle forms of 5 discrimination against new entrants, such as delaying 6 the availability of access, degrading the quality of 7 access, and charging more then the economic costs of 8 access. 9

For the foreseeable future, new firms will 10 depend upon the cooperation of the ILECs to provide 11 12 access to essential network facilities so that they may in turn provide retail level service. Yet this 13 merger would increase the incentives of the 14 15 post-merger company to engage in exclusionary conduct 16 by allowing it to internalize the value of raising 17 rivals' costs, not only in its original region, but in GTE's region as well. 18

19 Prior to its proposed merger, GTE launched, 20 quote, a competitive local exchange carrier that will 21 market the full spectrum of GTE services in key 22 markets without regard to franchise boundaries, 23 unquote.

24This vision has now radically changed to the25detriment of competition. From the outset of the

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passage of the act, GTE has taken every available 1 opportunity to maintain its position as the exclusive 2 provider of local service within its territories. 3 As this Florida Commission has noted in its 4 1998 report on competition in telecommunications 5 markets, GTE Florida must make substantial process --6 progress to fully open its markets to competition. 7 Notably, only one GTE Florida exchange has more than 8 1% penetration for residence lines, and 9 notwithstanding the large population in half of them, 10 competitors have not concentrated heavily on that 11 12 area. GTE's record as a monopoly access provider 13 is equally discouraging. Its access charges remain 14 substantially above costs, some twice as high as 15 BellSouth's. The ability to use these inflated access 16 charges to price squeeze companies will become even 17 more dangerous if placed in the hands of a combined 18 GTE/Bell Atlantic. 19 20 This merger would not speed the development of competition in GTE Florida service areas nor 21 accelerate the merged companies entry into 22 non-GTE Florida areas. This is particularly troubling 23 because there are substantial economies of scope and 24 scale for engaging in delay through litigation and 25

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1 regulation.

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2	Indeed, in a rare moment of candor, Bell
3	Atlantic has admitted that this is a central aspect of
4	the merger. As Bell Atlantic CEO, Ivan Seidenberg
5	colorfully put it, quote: "You know the expression,
6	'I want to be like Mike?' Well, in terms of
7	regulations, we want to be like Chuck," referring to
8	Charles Lee of GTE.
9	Similarly, Bell Atlantic general counsel
10	James Young told investors that GTE, quote, "has done
11	far better than Bell Atlantic has in getting unbundled
12	element rates," unquote.
13	These views bode poorly for consumers in
14	Florida and around the nation because they make clear
15	that Bell Atlantic intends to emulate GTE's aggressive
16	tactics to thwart the procompetitive purposes of the
17	act.
18	The pace at which competition grows is
19	critically dependent on the behavior of the ILECs
20	themselves in providing essential inputs to new
21	entrants on nondiscriminatory terms, including both
22	price and quality.
23	Importantly, that behavior is in turn
24	affected adversely by mergers such as this one that
25	enhance the incentive and ability of these firms to
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adopt exclusionary practices that inhibit entry. 1 Thus, the speculative market conditions that these 2 companies use to justify the merger are less likely to 3 materialize if the merger is approved, paradoxically. 4 Because the companies would be vertically 5 integrated, they will bear only the actual economic 6 7 cost of providing access when using their own facilities to originate and terminate their long 8 distance traffic. The other portion of the access 9 charge above economic costs amounts only to an 10 intracompany transfer payment. This increases the 11 incentive and ability to engage in a price squeeze, 12 for instance on a call from Tampa to New York or 13 14 Boston. This Commission has a strong interest in 15 ensuring that every Bell operating company subject to 16 17 Section 271 reviews fully and completely complies with the act. There is no provision in the act for 18 transitional relief from the incorporated requirements 19 of the section. 20 Congress made it clear that meaningful local 21 22 competition can only occur by full compliance with the In the long run, to do otherwise would 23 entire act. 24 undermine competition in Florida. 25 Again, the Florida data indicates that this

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merger is not necessary to ensure a viable local 1 competitor. GTE and Bell Atlantic claim that they 2 must combine into a super-RBOC with annual operating 3 revenues of \$53 billion dollars and market 4 capitalization of over \$125 billion for them to 5 compete in other local exchange markets. 6 At the same time, they contend that each is 7 somehow subject today to vigorous competition within 8 its region from a multitude of fledgling entrants that 9 have only a small fraction of each company's current 10 size and none of the advantages of an incumbent 11 monopoly. They cannot have it both ways. 12 1.3 This proposed merger will not yield any 14 social welfare gains. Procompetitive claims built 15 upon such a shaky foundation cannot support the weight 16 of a proposed merger of this magnitude. Bell Atlantic and GTE have couched their 17 application in language designed to avoid any 18 19 obligation to enter out-of-region markets should the merger be approved. Indeed, the only limitations on 20 each company's ability to enter each other's markets 21 now are those of will and not of size. 22 They have the back office capabilities and 23 24 local exchange expertise unmatched by the CLECs, given the monopoly rates that are available and the 25

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comparative advantage that Bell Atlantic and GTE have 1 in the other's local markets that no other prospective 2 entrant possesses. One can say that these companies 3 were objectively likely to enter each other's markets. 4 As was noted earlier, both companies have 5 long distance certificates from this Commission. 6 Interestingly, GTE's ALEC, GTECC, is the only one 7 reported to be serving throughout Florida. 8 GTE Florida's relatively compact and contiguous 9 service territory, combined with physical proximity to 10 other cities experiencing competitive entry, provide 11 GTE Florida with significant opportunities to compete 12 with the other incumbent LECs. 13 14 The companies promise an effort to target 15 additional business customers within 18 months, but will target residential customers only where it is 16 economically feasible to do so. Clearly, the 17 distinction indicates that the companies believe that 18 competition for business customers is profitable, but 19 20 the competition for residential customers is unlikely 21 to be; hardly a prospect that will benefit all 22 Floridians. 23 Rather, the policy in the public interest 24 for Florida is, I believe, to encourage the widest

25 possible competition in all local phone markets; not

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restrict that competition through a merger that would
 enable certain profitable customers to be
 cherry-picked.

4 On the other hand, without the merger, Bell 5 Atlantic could be a formidable competitor to 6 GTE Florida. As the companies know, Miami, as well as 7 other cities, share calling affinities with New York 8 and other cities in the northeast. Bell Atlantic can 9 and, I believe in time, would enter the Florida market 10 without the merger.

Another shortcoming is the failure to 11 12 provide a convincing explanation of why the alleged competitive benefits cannot be achieved by independent 13 entry into each other's service territories. That is, 14 why must public policy sacrifice competition between 15 16 those two companies? Clearly independent entry would have far greater pro-competitive effects. 17 The intensity of competition would be greater and would be 18 19 realized in more geographic areas if this merger is denied. 20

Further, the already diminished number of large incumbent LECs, the merger would make it sharply more difficult for both the FCC and this Commission to use regulatory processes to check market power abuses, both by these companies and the remaining RBOCs,

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1 || including BellSouth.

The merger would reduce the already dwindling set of companies that regulators can employ to force nondiscriminatory provision of monopoly inputs to the ILECs' nascent competitors. This loss has particular impact on new services and technologies where there are few established standards for judging ILEC conduct.

This concern has been well articulated by 9 FCC Commissioner Susan Ness. States, working as 10 partners with the FCC, should share this view as well. 11 The need for regulatory oversight increases 12 commensurately with the merger. Yet if the merger 13 simultaneously reduces regulators' ability to perform 14 this oversight function, then anticompetitive conduct 15 can be expected to escalate. 16

Finally, Bell Atlantic's failure to comply fully with commitments made as part of its acquisition of NYNEX should raise serious questions regarding fulfillment of its obligations under the 1996 Act and any special conditions that the FCC or other bodies may impose on Bell Atlantic.

As Chairman Kennard had asked, quote:
24 "Assuming that this Commission were to find that there
25 was a pattern of noncompliance by Bell Atlantic with

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these very important market opening provisions in the 1 law and in our rules, then why should we grant the 2 3 merger?" Yet according to Bell Atlantic's general 4 counsel, even if they had to make merger commitments 5 to secure the FCC's approval they could, quote, make 6 some concessions that look good but have really no 7 impact on business, unquote. 8 Can there be any serious doubt that if this 9 merger is approved, the merged company would, under 10 the theory of overregulation, oppose all rules and 11 12 proceedings intended to apply and enforce any 13 conditions? The simpler and more logical course is to 14 deny the application outright. In its 15 Bell Atlantic/NYNEX order, the FCC noted that further 16 reductions in the number of Bell companies or 17 comparable incumbent LECS would present serious public 18 interest concerns. Thus, the Commission stated that 19 further RBOC mergers would have to meet an additional 20 burden in establishing that a proposed merger will on 21 balance be pro-competitive and, therefore, serve the 22 public interest. 23 24 This the companies cannot hope to establish.

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The evidence is too far on the other side. Because

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ALECS are finally beginning to start operations in
 GTE Florida's service territory and experiencing many
 of the same problems experienced by new entrants in
 BellSouth's territory, Bell Atlantic's failure to
 comply with FCC conditions regarding market opening
 bodes ill for Florida.

With Bell Atlantic controlling GTE's Florida
service territory, competitors face the prospect of
the combined worst practices of GTE and Bell Atlantic
in restricting competition.

The competitive war for local exchange 11 12 markets has only recently been declared in Florida as 13 elsewhere. Consumers stand to benefit greatly from competitive battles that are hopefully soon to be 14 Lower prices, improved service and innovative 15 waged. service offerings will emerge as new and existing 16 rivals aggressively compete for the huge revenues at 17 stake. 18

19This is not the time for armistices to be20signed by prospective combatants. The peaceful life21of the monopolist is simply inconsistent with the22policy goal of promoting competition in this industry.23We respectfully suggest that this Commission24should advise the FCC and the U.S. Department of25Justice that this proposed merger is not in the public

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interest, will not promote competition in Florida, and 1 should, therefore, be denied. 2 3 Thank you. COMMISSIONER CLARK: Let me ask a question. 4 Do you think the standard should be that they must 5 show a positive impact? 6 MR. GARDNER: Yes, we believe that to be the 7 standard; and we believe that's the standard the FCC 8 would use as well. 9 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Where does that come 10 from? 11 MR. GARDNER: Well, it comes from the 12 structure of the Telecom Act in the first instance in 13 terms of the public policy goal of promoting 14 15 competition. Secondly, it comes from the 16 17 Bell Atlantic/NYNEX order where the Commission noted 18 that further RBOC mergers would pose very serious 19 public interest concerns and, therefore, that any 20 parties seeking such a merger would have an additional 21 burden of showing that the transaction would benefit 22 competition, not merely maintain the status quo --23 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Let me just ask --24 MR. GARDNER: Sure. 25 COMMISSIONER CLARK: -- it strikes me from a

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1	logic standpoint, what is the interest they are
2	protecting? Just by way of explanation, we have
3	we're supposed to approve territorial agreements
4	between elected companies, and I think at one point we
5	set a standard of showing a benefit to those people
6	affected by the merger. And I think what the court
7	says, it was no, you have to show some detriment,
8	because if you can't show any public interest that is
9	going to be harmed or something the government has an
10	interest in protecting, what can be your basis for
11	preventing something that you can show no harm for?
12	MR. GARDNER: Well, I'd make two comments.
13	First, I think the standard about a detriment is
14	really the antitrust standard which the Department of
15	Justice uses in analyzing the merger. And Assistant
16	Attorney General Klein, when he spoke on the
17	Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger, in essence said, I found
18	no potential competition; therefore, I could not show
19	an antitrust harm.
20	But in terms of the public interest
21	standard, I believe the FCC will be looking at a
22	balancing test; do the alleged procompetitive benefits
23	of the transaction outweigh anticompetitive
24	consequences. Among those consequences would be, for
25	instance, the reduction in the number of Bell

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1	operating companies which would reduce the
2	commissions' ability to benchmark and would also
3	through the strength of the combined companies make it
4	that much more difficult for competitive carriers to
5	enter the markets on a on reasonable terms. And
6	that's why I think the FCC will be using a balancing
7	test in which
8	COMMISSIONER CLARK: That's a little
9	different; a balancing test. Are you
10	MR. GARDNER: Well, a balancing test I think
11	implies that the balance has to be weighted towards
12	pro-competitive benefits. That's why I said that
13	there would be there would have to be benefits to
14	competition from if the merger were to be approved.
15	COMMISSIONER CLARK: Okay. Thank you.
16	MS. KEATING: Commissioners, let me just
17	point out that Mr. Gardner and Sprint's presenter,
18	Mr. Eisenberg, are both on the same 5:25 flight, so
19	that unless anybody has any specific questions for
20	them, I suggest that they be excused.
21	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Any questions? (No
22	response.) They may be excused.
23	MR. GARDNER: Thank you, Commissioner.
24	COMMISSIONER DEASON: We can revert to the
25	conclusion of Supra's presentation.
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1	MR. BUECHELE: We apologize for the time. I
2	think the whole point of our presentation, I think,
3	that maybe got a little bit out of hand was that there
4	is a better way to all of this.
5	The only way you're going to get any real
6	competition is if there's facilities-based
7	competition. The numbers that we have on the board on
8	display right here reflect what prices could be if
9	there was actually facilities-based competition.
10	Those numbers are based on having access to
11	facilities, and we believe that if you spread around
12	some of the facilities, that's the only way you're
13	going to jump start competition. That is why we have
14	a proposal that we would like some thought be given to
15	it in terms of how can you spread up some of the most
16	crucial assets, which are the last mile, in such a way
17	that you could really, really do something for
18	stimulating competition.
19	And one of the things that we believe that
20	our proposal has is that if you divest and we have
21	a little block diagram here but this just
22	demonstrates that where you have central offices
23	represented by each square within an entire block,
24	there really is no really facilities-based
25	competition.

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The incumbent LEC will service any areas 1 through the central office within that grid. If you 2 were to throw in some others, what would happen is 3 given the fact that distances would be greatly 4 reduced, your distances are now only a few miles to 5 businesses, shopping centers, new developments, 6 housing communities, things of that nature. 7 It then becomes feasible to branch out from 8 a central office into another area serviced by the 9 incumbent's central office; and what you could 10 potentially have is competition, real facilities-based 11 12 competition, for areas served by different central offices because of the reduced distances involved. 13 You could conceivably, if you spread them 14 15 around among a number of ILECs or ALECs and the 16 incumbent ILEC, have a situation where, in fact, you 17 could have two or three or maybe even more carriers 18 competing for -- competing for the business of

consumers within the territories -- or within the
areas currently served by a central office.

We also believe that, given that scenario, what would happen is that you're faced with the prospect of losing the business. The incumbent, or whoever that area encompasses would have a great incentive to share the wealth in such a way of either

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1	through reasonable resale or through collocation or
2	interconnection or unbundled network elements, because
3	if your prospect is to lose a new housing community or
4	a large shopping center or office building or
5	something of that nature, rather than lose it based
6	upon the fact that there are short distances involved
7	in branching out, you may have a great incentive to
8	actually let the your competitor within your
9	central office or give them access to your unbundled
10	network elements or collocation or even resale.
11	And that, we believe, would ultimately
12	create a situation where you have fair agreements that
13	are being filed and entered into and which other
14	people can adopt. And so that's what we believe that
15	a strategy of divestiture on the most basic level of
16	the central office assets would do something to
17	really, really generate competition.
18	And, like we said before, some of these
19	benefits are that with when you're only within a
20	few miles of a local exchange carrier, there are
21	incentives to either run those connections into the
22	competing carrier's area or enter into fair
23	agreements.
24	We believe that this kind of divestiture
25	would foster a cooperative environment between the

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incumbents and an acquiring ALEC. We believe that it 1 would encourage stability and restore the 2 entrepreneurial confidence in the CLEC industry. We 3 believe that it would help lead to the reduction and 4 elimination of regulation by some real competition. 5 We also believe that the proposal, like we 6 said, would result in the negotiation of reasonable 7 bilateral agreements between competing 8 9 facilities-based carriers, which will potentially have a snowball effect of allowing others, other carriers, 10 other ALECs, to adopt those favorable arrangements and 11 12 provisions and, thereby, helping to facilitate some of the great barriers that exist right now in entering 13 into the territories of these central offices. And we 14 believe that this would help eliminate some of those 15 barriers and the pitfalls currently existing in the 16 interconnection and resale agreements and collocation 17 18 agreements. 19 We also believe that based upon the fact

that you would have to divest information about those central offices, that it would require sharing of the OSS and the databases that underlie it, thus loosening the ILECs' grip on this important aspect of running every -- any telecommunications business.

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And, finally, we believe that if it was

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spread around, some of these assets were spread around
 to other ALECs, you would create some significantly
 good sized ALECs for the FCC and state regulators to
 help benchmark.

5 We also believe that this proposal would 6 still fit in line with the stated goals of the merging 7 companies in that they want to do out-of-territory and 8 global expansion. We believe that this proposal would 9 stimulate new and innovative telecommunications 10 services.

11 Certainly we believe that it would foster 12 all the benefits of competition that we talked about 13 before, including new data networks and all kinds of 14 new services that only a competitive environment can 15 bring; and that when there's real competition, people 16 have an incentive to compete for the business.

17 Supra, this company, is trying to construct 18 a modern network, facilities-based network, and 19 certainly this company would like an opportunity to 20 bid on some of those assets.

21 So at this point I will turn it over to 22 Mr. Ramos to wrap up.

23 MR. RAMOS: Thank you very much,
24 Commissioners, for granting us this opportunity to
25 wrap up this presentation.

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According to the FCC during -- the 1 implementation of the 1996 Act will attempt to 2 determine the best ways to encourage competition and 3 pave the way for aggressive competition in the local 4 markets. 5 We believe that the process of opening local 6 telecom markets to continue under regulation will 7 likely be slowed by consolidation among incumbent 8

9 LECs, who would otherwise be a participant in the
10 process. That part was taken out of the
11 Bell Atlantic/NYNEX order.

12 An example of divestiture conditions imposed 13 on a merger is the current example of the MCI WorldCom 14 You recall, Commissioners, that last year MCI merger. 15 WorldCom announced their merger intentions, and the 16 European union took the lead about the summer of last year and decided that before the merger of 17 MCI WorldCom could be approved by regulators, that 18 MCI WorldCom should agree to divest one of its 19 20 Internet assets, probably the UUNET asset or the MCI backbone itself. 21

GTE was one of the companies that fought tooth and nail to get this issue approved at that point in time. As a matter of fact, before the European union came up with its decision at that time,

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GTE had already filed a lawsuit in the federal courts challenging the merger of MCI WorldCom, and eventually MCI WorldCom had to sell the Internet business to Cable & Wireless, to transfer the assets to Cable & Wireless, as well as the employees; and Cable & Wireless got the right to use MCI's name for a year after the divestiture.

8 According to the 26th president of the 9 United States, President Theodore Roosevelt, he said 10 once that in this world the one thing simply worth 11 having is the opportunity to do well, and a piece of 12 work of vital consequence to the welfare of mankind.

Because what we are asking here today that the Commission should do -- and the regulators should impose the conditions of this merger -- is to be looked at from the point of view that it's going to improve the welfare of the people.

And, Commissioners, I'd like to add one 18 19 thing; that the only difference between Bell 20 Atlantic's pleadings and Supra's proposal is that while Bell Atlantic is requesting an asset acquisition 21 through a merger approval, Supra is seeking an asset 22 acquisition through divestiture. Without required 23 assets, Supra will not be able to implement its 24 25 national services strategy.

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1	Commissioners, the Commission is the
2	conscience of this industry, a role that regulators
3	have played for almost 130 years. You set the rules
4	and standards for industry. This is about what is
5	right for the people of Florida, the American public
6	and the TA.
7	In her newest book, "It Takes a Village,"
8	the First Lady, Mrs. Rodham Clinton, talked about the
9	fact that it takes the collective responsibility of
10	all of us to raise a child. As one of the FCC
11	Commissioners recently stated, think of the TA as a
12	child. And that is Commissioner Susan Ness.
13	The Congress of this country, by the passage
14	of the TA, placed the ultimate responsibility of
15	raising the TA in the laps of this Commission as well
16	as the other commissions.
17	When I think of the tortuous route my
18	colleagues and I have traveled in the last three years
19	or so to get to this stage that we are right now, when
20	I think of the tears and pains that we have
21	collectively shed and shared, the 100% consumers that
22	want to save on their local telephone bill, the
23	Floridians that want a choice in their local telephone
24	service, as well as the Americans who want one bill
25	for their telecommunications services, and this whole

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1	process, I think about what President Theodore
2	Roosevelt said, and would very much appreciate it if
3	you can find it in your wisdom to write a letter to
4	the FCC backing the proposal that Supra submitted to
5	the FCC and to this Commission on this merger.
6	Like I said early on, the FCC has such
7	rights to place conditions on divestiture
8	conditions on mergers. The European union did it last
9	year; says the initiatives were from the U.S.
10	regulators, the U.S. regulators had no choice but to
11	agree with the European union, because the MCI
12	WorldCom transaction was more of a global transaction.
13	In this instance, you don't have the
14	European union interfering in this process because the
15	Bell Atlantic/GTE transaction is more of a local
16	transaction than a global transaction. And in that
17	case, that means it's left to the U.S. regulators to
18	determine what would be best for consumers and
19	competition.
20	Thank you very much.
21	MS. KEATING: We had reserved a few minutes
22	at the end of the presentations for additional
23	discussion if there is any; for instance, if there's
24	any specific questions for any of the previous
25	presenters from the Commissioners or from other

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participants. 1 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Any questions? 2 MR. BUECHELE: We have some questions and 3 we'd like to voice them to the merging parties, GTE 4 and Bell Atlantic. 5 And one of the things that we'd like to know 6 is if GTE cannot compete right now in Miami and it's 7 already the same size or larger than BellSouth, why 8 are they going to be able to compete in Miami after 9 they merge? And, in fact, if that's the case, how big 10 does BellSouth have to be in order to compete in GTE 11 areas in Florida such as Tampa? 12 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Is anyone here going 13 to respond? Please identify yourself again for the 14 record. 15 MR. GOULD: I'm Jeff Gould with GTE 16 17 Corporation. We have -- as we've indicated, the 18 reason we'll be able to complete in Miami after the 19 merger is because of the existing customer relationships that Bell Atlantic brings to the merged 20 21 entity. We've made that clear in our filings and in our comments today, I believe. 22 MR. BUECHELE: And we'd also like to know if 23 it's true that GTE will be divesting itself of many of 24 its assets at this point in time. 25

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MR. GOULD: I think you're referring to the 1 property repositioning that we initiated in 1998. 2 And, yes, we are in the process of divesting -- I 3 believe it's approximately 1.5 million access lines. 4 COMMISSIONER JACOBS: What will happen to 5 those? 6 Those are being offered for sale 7 MR. GOULD: to parties who are willing to bid on them. They're in 8 a number of states. None of them are in Florida, but 9 they are up for sale and we are currently negotiating 10 with prospective buyers. 11 MR. BUECHELE: Does GTE agree with the fact 12 that the only way you can compete is with 13 facilities-based? 14 MR. GOULD: We believe that the primary --15 the best way to compete is with facilities-based 16 assets. We do, however, believe -- and we will enter 17 18 initially using either unbundled networks or resale, but ultimately facilities-based competition is the 19 only really competition. 20 MR. BUECHELE: And how then can Bell 21 22 Atlantic not compete in Miami using unbundled network 23 elements or anything of that nature in a facilities-based scheme without actually having 24 25 central offices at this time, as opposed to requiring

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1	GTE
2	MR. MATHIS: I'm Mark Mathis with Bell
3	Atlantic. We can't compete now. If you look at our
4	experience in long distance, we had grand visions of
5	how successful we were going to be in Florida and
6	other states, and we have less than 10,000 customers
7	as a reseller.
8	It hasn't been a great success. We don't
9	have a presence here. And our hope is that by
10	combining with GTE, we're going to be able to take
11	advantage of the facilities they have, including their
12	BBN, backbone Internet network, to provide service.
13	MR. BUECHELE: And would you agree that the
14	best way to have competition in any area is to have a
15	central office in that area?
16	MR. MATHIS: I don't know what the best way
17	is. I mean, that remains to be seen. We're going to
18	be entering these markets, as our chairman said, and
19	see how we do. We may not be successful, but we're
20	certainly going to try.
21	And if you want to have RBOC to RBOC
22	competition, which is what a lot of the public policy
23	makers of this country want, then that's what we
24	offer.
25	What's not going to happen here and,
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frankly, I find it sort of amazing to listen to this 1 discussion this afternoon. There's all this talk 2 about the fact that you're going to be eliminating an 3 RBOC. Well, GTE never has been, is not, and never 4 will be an RBOC. It was not part of the Bell system. 5 In addition, this really has nothing to do 6 with 271 in our states. We can provide long distance 7 now here in Florida, and we do; and the fact that 8 9 there is a merger is not going to eliminate us as a 10 long distance provider, however small we may be in It's just not relevant for this particular 11 Florida. market. 12 13 MR. BUECHELE: And just one more thing. In Florida right now isn't it true that whether or not 14 15 you choose to, let's say, go into the Miami area depends upon the economics of it, since right now GTE 16 is not there, and certainly you could, without GTE, 17 18 either establish your own central offices in the Miami 19 area or work out arrangements with BellSouth because, 20 in fact, they're your customers that you say have the 21 connection between Miami and the northeast? 22 MR. MATHIS: Well, it's true that it is a matter of economics, and right now we don't think that 23 24 with the combination that we have as ourselves, that we can make a go of it. We haven't been able to be 25

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successful in long distance, much less being able to 1 then go take on local. 2 On the other hand, when you combine Bell 3 Atlantic with GTE, you're putting together two 4 companies with two very different organizations and 5 facilities. I mean, they do have Internet assets. We 6 don't. We have nothing. We're a reseller in Florida 7 of long distance. 8 And the hope is -- and, you know, you never 9 know if these things are going to work out -- but the 10 11 hope is that by combining the two companies, we will 12 be able to combine our different best practices, our 13 different facilities, our different strengths to be a successful competitor to BellSouth. 14 Now, if you want -- if this Commission and 15 16 the FCC wants to take a chance that that's something 17 that might happen, they should approve the merger. This Commission already has, but I guess the issue 18 19 here is whether or not they want to support the merger in front of the FCC. 20 MR. BUECHELE: Would you agree or disagree 21 that the competition in the long distance market only 22 occurred when people had the ability to have the 23 physical assets to transport that long distance and it 24 was spread amongst a lot of companies? 25

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MR. MATHIS: I wouldn't agree with that at 1 In fact, I think if you look at the MCI all. 2 strategy, they initially started doing their resale, 3 and over time, they built out their facilities. 4 I don't think that only being able to 5 provide long distance through facilities was the basis 6 7 for competition. MR. GOULD: I'd point out that GTE today is 8 providing long distance, has a substantial long 9 distance business in excess of 2 and a half million 10 customers, and it is not a facilities-based long 11 distance business. 12 COMMISSIONER JACOBS: It appears that you 13 14 guys are looking at an end run game that's pretty much 15 a national and international marketplace and the RBOCs are going to be the major players. Is that a fair 16 assessment? 17 MR. GOULD: Yes. We believe that the new 18 19 marketplace is one for bundled packages provided nationwide, and we want to be able to compete with 20 21 AT&T, TCI, MCI WorldCom, Sprint, Deutsch Telecom, Those are the three major players in 22 France Telecom. the worldwide market for bundled telecom services. 23 24 This merger enables us to us compete in that market 25 with those players.

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COMMISSIONER JACOBS: As policy makers here 1 then, how do we ensure that -- particularly in a state 2 where we have some high density areas, but the large 3 part of this marketplace are not high density areas, 4 how do we make sure then that we maintain some level 5 of competitiveness in those areas as well? 6 MR. GOULD: I think you certainly do have 7 that obligation, and we have an obligation to see that 8 that's carried out with you. 9 And as I spoke earlier, we believe that the 10 appropriate way to get full-scale residential 11 competition in all markets is to remove the subsidies 12 from the existing rate structure. 13 If you want competition in the local 14 residential market, your -- the subsidies that are 15 16 presently there today create prices that are below cost, making it uneconomical for a new entrant to 17 18 compete. To get competition you have to remove those subsidies and collect them in some other way. 19 20 COMMISSIONER JACOBS: Thank you. 21 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Further questions? MR. RAMOS: Actually, Commissioners, I'm 22 23 sorry. The particular issue that was raised by Commissioner Johnson earlier on before she left on 24 asking the ILECs to divest themselves of their central 25

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offices and the loops, an idea that was formerly
 propounded by LTD, she said that during the course of
 our presentation we should mention something about it,
 about that particular issue.

In Connecticut there used to be a company called SNET. Right now SNET has been was acquired by SBC -- SNET, S-N-E-T, was acquired by SBC last year. That used to be the incumbent local exchange carrier in the state of Connecticut.

And the Connecticut Public Utilities 10 Commission in 1997 did an experiment with SNET where 11 they formed two separate companies from the present 12 13 SNET. One was in charge of the central offices and the local loops, and then the other one was --14 provided services directly to the public. And that's 15 16 the kind of idea that Commissioner Johnson was talking about earlier on. 17

That whole scenario right now has collapsed 18 19 because of the fact that SBC has acquired SNET, and even before the acquisition of SNET by SBC, the idea 20 21 itself suffered a lot of setbacks because of what our counsel said earlier on. The companies are still the 22 23 same corporations, though you have a wholesale unit 24 and you have a resale unit; but the point of the matter still remains, that the culture of the 25

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individual employees of the corporations are still the 1 2 same. So we're just trying to reinforce that, that 3 that idea is totally different from our divestiture 4 idea. Our divestiture idea is saying that those 5 assets should be sold to small or medium-sized ALECs 6 that would be able to compete with these companies. 7 MR. BUECHELE: We have a question. Are any 8 of the assets being divested by GTE located within 9 current Bell Atlantic territories? 10 MR. GOULD: No. We have some assets. The 11 only two states where we serve territory that Bell 12 Atlantic also serves is Pennsylvania and Virginia. 13 14 And at the present -- as part of the original 15 offering, none of those assets were offered for sale. 16 MR. MATHIS: I should say that once upon a time they were in some of our states and they did 17 dispose of those assets. 18 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Any further questions? 19 MR. BUECHELE: Just one more. 20 Do you have any proposal for creating any 21 22 real competition between the RBOCs, or is it just merger? 23 24 MR. MATHIS: Well, I think we've set forth our proposal for real competition with the RBOCs. 25 You

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may not like it. You may not believe it. You may not 1 wanted to endorse it, but we think it's a good 2 proposal and would start here in Florida with Miami 3 Orlando and Jacksonville. And we think that's a real 4 proposal for competition with RBOCs, and we have it in 5 several other states as well. 6 MR. BUECHELE: Did you do any of that 7 8 competition after you -- Bell Atlantic merged with 9 NYNEX? 10 MR. MATHIS: Well, after Bell Atlantic 11 merged with NYNEX, we were not going into Miami, Orlando or Jacksonville. 12 MR. BUECHELE: How about anywhere else? 13 MR. MATHIS: Well, why would we do that? 14 The reason for doing the GTE merger is to facilitate 15 our ability to compete in places like Miami. 16 17 MS. MILLER: Commissioners, if I could, I 18 think originally this workshop sprung from, I think, 19 Sprint's request that you weigh in at the federal 20 level. And so we have received their comments, we 21 have reviewed them, and then I think Mary Bane asked 22 that you hold a workshop on it. 23 We're looking for any input that you want to If not, we'll try to develop something, but 24 qive us. this has been a hard one for us as to how you might 25

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want us to weigh in and, you know, whether you're
comfortable.

COMMISSIONER CLARK: See, my thought was --3 and the purpose of this is to sort of look beyond just 4 Florida and look at it from the standpoint of what 5 would we suggest to the authority -- the authority 6 that has the ability to do something about it; are 7 8 there concerns that have been raised today that we would like to say we've heard from them and we think 9 these merit your further looking at them. 10 I mean, I'd be concerned that they're going 11 to have 32% of the access lines. On the other hand, 12 they may be right, that the end game sort of is going 13 to be a global competition, and that you will have 14 large -- five large companies, perhaps, that are the 15 ultimate competitors. But what does that mean 16 regionally? 17 18 I think there is a concern that it will have 19 the impact that the airline industry has had. 20 Frankly, I'm tired of paying the rates we have to pay 21 just get to Atlanta, and it's because there's no real 22 competition on that route. 23 COMMISSIONER JACOBS: I think I'll echo particularly the last point. I don't doubt that the 24

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driving forces right now in the international and the

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national marketplace are as described here. I think
 we have to be focused on what does this mean for this
 region, for this state, and what are the implications,
 what issues are raised.

5 I don't know that we can make final 6 determinations, but I think issues -- we can raise 7 issues. We can indicate to the agency what we think 8 should be important considerations that they look at, 9 and then I think we may reiterate things that we've 10 heard on how they play into those issues.

I'd be concerned that we don't get lost in 11 the shuffle. I think that we have to recognize what 12 things are unique to Florida, what things are unique 13 to this region, how those issues that are raised by 14 this transaction affect those particular issues, and 15 to what extent we might offer some solutions; and then 16 17 I think that's something that we have to vote on and 18 figure out where we go from there.

19 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Let me offer my20 thoughts.

21 Obviously our jurisdiction is limited in 22 this regard. We've already recognized that fact. 23 We've taken action to the extent that we have 24 jurisdiction. The question is now do we wish to 25 provide additional comments to the ultimate decision

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Just because we've requested comments and 2 we've held this workshop, I don't think that it's 3 necessary that we file comments. So I think, Staff, 4 you need to evaluate whether it is worthwhile to file 5 comments. Whether we have something to add to the 6 7 debate and we feel compelled enough to enter into that debate so that hopefully the end product would be 8 better for it. 9

Just because we've gone through this 10 exercise, don't feel like you have an obligation to 11 come back with a recommendation that we have anything 12 to do at this point. But if Staff feels compelled and 13 wants to make a recommendation, I think that's the 14 process that needs to follow is that you need to make 15 a recommendation to the Commission that, first of all, 16 17 that we do file comments and what those comments 18 should say.

MS. MILLER: I don't have a Commission
calendar in front of me, but I think the next Internal
Affairs is around the 16th, so I don't think we'd make
that one because we'd have to turn them in by next
Wednesday, I think.

24 COMMISSIONER DEASON: When are the comments 25 due?

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MS. MILLER: Well, that's interesting. 1 We've talked to the FCC and the Department of Justice, 2 and basically they don't have an exact deadline, and 3 they say that the sooner you weigh in, the better your 4 chance of having it seriously considered, but that 5 overall, they were -- the FCC said they were kind of 6 on a six-month time clock; and I think they said that 7 last month. 8 So there's no exact deadline, and so I guess 9 what I'm thinking about is bringing something to 10 Internal Affairs or the recommendation not to file 11 anything; the Internal Affairs after the one on the 12 16th. 13 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Is that fine? 14 15 COMMISSIONER CLARK: Fine. 16 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Okay. MR. BUECHELE: Could I -- just one comment 17 before we --18 19 COMMISSIONER DEASON: I want you to recognize that we're after the allotted hour that we 20 21 were going to conclude this, so make your comment extremely brief. 22 23 MR. BUECHELE: I appreciate your brevity. Ι would just like to tell the Commission that the fact 24 that you've recognized that you have limited authority 25

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1	and have ruled the way you have, based on that limited			
2	authority, if you don't provide comments to the FCC,			
3	it means that the state of Florida will not have			
4	voiced its position on this matter. And we think that			
5	perhaps an issue of such great magnitude as this,			
6	perhaps we should and we would implore the			
7	Commission to think about actually voicing the state's			
8	opinion on that, because, in fact, that's what our			
9	democracy is about, in hoping to have our voices			
10	heard.			
11	Thank you.			
12	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Okay. Does Staff have			
13	any concluding comments?			
14	MS. MILLER: One person has raised the idea			
15	of us sending our competition report. So I'm just			
16	going to put that and for folks to think about, and			
17	we may bring that back. We're just debating a lot of			
18	things.			
19	COMMISSIONER DEASON: I'm sorry. Which			
20	report?			
21	MS. MILLER: Our Florida competition report			
22	that we have to file with the Legislature.			
23	COMMISSIONER DEASON: Okay. All right. I			
24	want to thank everyone for your attendance and			
25	participation, and this workshop is now concluded.			

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1	(Thereupon, the workshop concluded	
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STATE OF FLORIDA) 1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER 2 COUNTY OF LEON) I, H. RUTHE POTAMI, CSR, RPR, FPSC 3 Commission Reporter, 4 DO HEREBY CERTIFY that this Undocketed Workshop was heard by the Florida Public Service 5 Commission at the time and place herein stated; it is further 6 7 CERTIFIED that I stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the same has been transcribed by me; and that this transcript, 8 consisting of 148 pages, constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings. 9 DATED this 5th day of March, 1999. 10 11 12 H. RUTHE POTAMI, CSR, RPR Official Commission Reporter 13 (904) 413-6734 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

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