



Cumberland Development Corporation

PO Box 1021, Bridgeton, New Jersey 08302

*Promoting Economic and Community Development
Through Intermunicipal and Public-Private Cooperation*

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Executive Director:

Anthony Stanzione

Serving:

Bridgeton

Deerfield

Hopewell

Lawrence

Maurice River

Shiloh

Stow Creek

Upper Deerfield

**Board of Directors /
Officers**

Chairman:

Mayor Bruce Hankins

Hopewell

Vice Chairman:

Committeewoman

Kathy Ireland, Maurice River

Secretary:

vacancy

Treasurer:

Committeeman Elmer

Skip Bowman

Lawrence

Mayor John Stanzione

Deerfield

Mayor Dallus Bruso

Shiloh

Mayor Randy Dickinson

Stow Creek

Mayor James Crilley

Upper Deerfield

Alternate Members:

Jack Surrency, Bridgeton

Frank Spatola, Deerfield

Paul Ritter, Hopewell

Erwin Sheppard, Lawrence

Patti Gross, Maurice River

Shiloh - vacancy

Dale Cruzan, Jr.,

Stow Creek

Terry O'Neill, Upper

Deerfield

March 18, 2014

NJ Board of Public Utilities
Kristi Izzo, Secretary
44 South Clinton Avenue, 9th Floor
PO Box 350
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350

RE: Comments on Docket No. T012020155 – Proposed Stipulation of Agreement between BPU Board Staff and Verizon New Jersey – Alleged Failure of Verizon to Comply with Opportunity New Jersey Commitments

To the Board of Public Utilities:

The Board of Directors of the Cumberland Development Corporation, which consists of the Mayors or other governing body members of eight Cumberland County municipalities – Bridgeton, Deerfield, Hopewell, Lawrence, Maurice River, Shiloh, Stow Creek and Upper Deerfield, joins with other area municipalities, the County of Cumberland and the people of the region in voicing our strong opposition to the acceptance of this proposed agreement by the NJ BPU. A summary of our concerns and reasons for opposition follows:

1. With well over 8% of the population of Cumberland County remaining without access to reliable broadband service, we oppose any agreement that would indicate that Verizon New Jersey has met its requirements under Opportunity New Jersey.
2. Verizon New Jersey customers have paid \$15 billion in surcharges to help ensure that all of New Jersey residents and businesses have access to broadband via fiber optic infrastructure. Verizon must be compelled to do more to fully meet its obligation, especially in a poorer, rural, agricultural-based counties like Cumberland and Salem.
3. The coverage data that the BPU may be relying on appears flawed, making it appear that more areas in the County have wired or wireless coverage when they do not or the service that exists is not reliable. We strongly urge the BPU to obtain verifiable coverage data produced by an independent source with the expertise to produce this critically important data on which current decisions are being made.
4. In any settlement or action between BPU and Verizon, there must be a sensitivity to and recognition of the special nature of this important agricultural region where vast amounts of public funds have been invested to preserve farmland permanently and where the business of farming is so important to the local and the state economy. Lack of broadband service to these rural areas, puts this important part of the region's and state's economy at risk and all underserved farms and businesses at a competitive disadvantage.
5. By the very nature of the agricultural area and the preserved lands, these areas should not be expected to meet density requirements like other more populated and developable areas of New Jersey in order to have the opportunity for broadband services.

6. Residents and students who live in these rural areas in Cumberland and other counties should not be denied fair access to the educational opportunities provided through good broadband service.

For these reasons, the Board of Directors of Cumberland Development Corporation asks the NJ BPU, the Governor and our Legislators to withhold approval of this proposed agreement and to instead require Verizon New Jersey to fully meet its obligations to the people of Hopewell Township, Cumberland County and to all the people and to all areas of Cumberland County and New Jersey.

Sincerely,



Tony Stanzione
Executive Director

cc: NJ Governor Chris Christy
NJ Third District Legislators - Senate President Steve Sweeney, Assemblyman John Burzichelli, Assemblywoman Celeste Riley
NJ First District Legislators - Senator Jeff Van Drew and Assemblymen Robert Andrzejczak and Sam Fiochi
Cumberland County Planning Board Rural Infrastructure Committee
Cumberland County Freeholders
Hopewell Township Committee, Cumberland County, NJ