



New Jersey SHARES, Inc.
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March 21, 2014

New Jersey Board of Public Utilities
C/O Ms. Kristi Izzo, Secretary
44 South Clinton Avenue, 9th Floor
Post Office Box 350
Trenton, N.J. 08625-0350

RE: Verizon New Jersey (Docket No. TO12020155)

Dear Commission Members:

We at NJ SHARES urge you to approve the proposed stipulation between Verizon – New Jersey and your Staff. We understand it is currently under your review in Docket No. TO12020155. As you are aware, we work closely with Verizon and believe the proposed stipulation will help expand the availability of what is becoming an increasingly essential service in our society – broadband.

NJ SHARES partners with 242 human service agencies with 298 application sites statewide to provide critically needed energy assistance to families that are not eligible for other programs. Throughout the state, our partners address a broad spectrum of client needs. Providing case management services, they assist households with counseling, nutrition, housing, employment, as well as energy issues. Working together with our partner agencies we provide a holistic solution to the household's temporary or ongoing needs. Subsequently, NJ SHARES formed a partnership with Verizon – New Jersey to provide telephone assistance programs.

While we do not provide broadband assistance programs, broadband Internet is a critical tool that enables our work toward other goals. Furthermore, we can attest to the increasing role wireless and wired broadband networks play in people's lives. Not too unlike other basic needs like housing and energy, broadband now provides a plethora of services that can help sustain and improve quality of life. This is especially true as more vital services like healthcare consultations with physicians can now be administered through the Internet.

For those reasons, we believe the Board of Public Utilities should encourage companies like Verizon to continue their efforts to deploy their latest broadband technologies across New Jersey. We are moving into a new era in which broadband Internet access – especially through wireless – will be an indispensable part of everyone's lives. We need to make sure New Jersey is prepared for that future and your approval the proposed stipulation will help us get there.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
