



**City of Long Beach**  
**Working Together to Serve**

**R-12**  
Memorandum

**Office of Councilmember Steven Neal**  
Councilmember, 9<sup>th</sup> District

**Date:** April 15, 2014  
**To:** Honorable Mayor Bob Foster and Members of the City Council  
**From:** Councilmember Steven Neal, Ninth District *SN*  
**Subject:** "Quality Telecommunications" Resolution

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**Recommendation:** Request City Attorney draft resolution encouraging telecommunications providers to upgrade their wired and wireless networks in a manner that limits service impacts and benefits the Long Beach community.

**Background:** Verizon Telecommunications is planning to replace traditional copper land line phone networks with wireless technology in an effort to save money. This new service is called Voice Link and is now being introduced in California. While there are financial benefits to going wireless, there are still many concerns related to the transition.

The reliability of Voicelink in the event of emergencies and natural disasters has been questioned, based on its dependency on short-term battery life. Voice Link may not be fully compatible with evacuation procedures used in emergencies. A spike in usage, as in the event of a major fire, earthquake or other natural disaster, causes many calls to be blocked or dropped.

Voice Link does not carry a data signal; it only carries a voice signal. As a result, customers may not have access to DSL, fax service, home security and fire alarm systems, home monitoring systems (such as LifeAlert) or medical monitoring services.

Further, Voice Link does not support point-of-sale credit card devices that do work over wired dial-up access lines. This directly affects the abilities of small businesses to be competitive.

The City of Long Beach should support a smooth transition from copper lines to wireless service, ensuring that telephone service providers:

1. Invest in high-speed networks on an equitable basis to serve all residents, businesses, and community institutions.
2. Support quality jobs in the telecommunications industry and the community.
3. Promote quality, affordable voice, video, and data service to everyone.
4. Ensure network reliability.
5. Promote access to public safety.
6. Maintain strong consumer protections.

**Fiscal Impact:** There is no fiscal impact.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE LONG BEACH CITY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF A  
COMPREHENSIVE POLICY TO ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM COPPER  
LINES TO WIRELESS SERVICE.**

WHEREAS, QUALITY, AFFORDABLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES AND HIGH-SPEED Internet are essential to economic development and job creation: advances in e-government, public safety, and civic participation; improvements in education, health care, environmental protection, and independent living for people who are disabled, ill, or have restricted mobility; and

WHEREAS, telecommunications providers are upgrading wired and wireless networks to provide the capability needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century data-intensive and video-rich applications, but the deployment of these advanced networks is uneven, leaving some communities with inferior telecommunications services, deepening the digital divide; and

WHEREAS, the transition to new communications technologies should represent a step forward for all residents, businesses, and community institutions, providing better access to affordable, high-speed wireline and wireless networks delivering voice, video, and data services; and

WHEREAS, Verizon is substituting an inferior wireless service marketed as Voice Link for traditional voice landline service, and Voice Link threatens public safety and network reliability because it has no back-up power and is subject to network congestion during power outages and weather emergencies; does not support connections to the internet; and is not compatible with medical alert, home security systems, fax machines, credit card, and other services;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Long Beach encourages telecommunications providers to upgrade their wired and wireless networks on the basis of these six public interest principles:

1. Invest in high-speed networks on an equitable basis to serve all residents, businesses, and community institutions.
2. Support quality jobs in the telecommunications industry and the community.
3. Promote quality, affordable voice, video, and data service to everyone.
4. Ensure network reliability.
5. Promote public safety.
6. Maintain strong consumer protections.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Long Beach is concerned about the imminent substitution of Verizon's Voice Link wireless service for traditional landline service.