

Dear Fellow Saltairian:

Many of you have been following the reporting of proceedings before the NYS Public Service Commission (PSC) involving an application by Verizon seeking approval to discontinue its current copper wire service on Fire Island and instead offer a wireless service (Voice Link) as its sole service offering on the Island.

In a critically important decision announced in Albany yesterday afternoon, the PSC has decided to allow Verizon to **temporarily** offer the wireless Voice Link service on Fire Island while a **permanent solution** to rebuild the phone system after Superstorm Sandy **remains under consideration**. Verizon was *not* granted approval to abandon all current copper wire service.

The PSC explained that it made this provisional decision because it is critical that service be available to Fire Island immediately and that its was only by establishing this service under a new Tariff that they could gain effective oversight and control. Therefore they will allow Verizon's request to use Voice Link in the western part of Fire Island to go into effect, but only temporarily and subject to further review, monitoring and public comment.

This decision was consistent with the relief that we sought when we filed our protest to the application with the PSC earlier this week. We will continue to stay closely involved in this matter.

A copy of the PSC decision, and also a Commission press release explaining the details are attached as well as some answers to frequently asked questions.

Q and A's on the PSC decision about Voice Link

1. What did the PCS decide about wireless Voice Link Service on Fire Island?

The New York State Public Service Commission approved an interim measure to allow Verizon to temporarily offer the wireless Voice Link (VL) service as an alternative to basic landline service on Fire Island where the copper wire infra-structure was damaged by Sandy.

2. Is this a final PSC decision on Verizon's plan to abandon copper wire on the Island and go to Voice Link?

NO, this is not final. The Commission gave only temporary approval of the VL service, limited to western Fire Island, pending public comment and a further review of documentation submitted by Verizon justifying its decision not to repair the damaged copper wire facilities. It did approve Verizon's request to abandon copper wire service.

3. Will the Voice Link service continue to be regulated by the PSC (even though it is a wireless service)?

YES. Under the tariff provision, Verizon is mandated to offer the Voice Link service according to Commission rules and regulations for basic telephone service. The Chairman of the Commission made the following statement on this key issue of continued PSC regulatory oversight: **“The Commission will exercise its regulatory authority over this service to ensure consumers on Fire Island are protected with requirements relating to customer protection, customer complaints, service quality, safety and reliability, and we will continue to explore what are the best options for permanent repair.”**

4. Will the PSC review the terms of service that Verizon has proposed for Voice Link?

YES. The Commission directed Verizon to file a copy of its proposed terms and service for Voice Link, which must be consistent with Commission rules and regulations for basic telephone service, for review.

5. Will there be additional opportunity for public comment on Verizon’s Voice Link plan for Fire Island?

YES. As part of the ongoing proceeding, the Commission said it will seek comments from interested parties on Verizon’s technology and service plan as the Commission works to determine a permanent solution. Comments can be submitted to the PSC at <http://www3.dps.ny.gov>

6. How long will this “trial’ of the Voice Link service on Fire Island continue?

The Commission directed Verizon to provide it with a comprehensive report evaluating the quality and reliability of Voice Link to Fire Island customers by **November 1, 2013**.

Bob Cox
Mayor, VOS