



TOWN OF HAWLEY
MASSACHUSETTS 01339

8 PUDDING HOLLOW ROAD
TELEPHONE: 413-339-5518
FAX: 413-339-4959

September 22, 2026 WWW.TOWNOFHAWLEY.COM

Federal Communications Commission
Wireline Competition Bureau
Competition Policy Division
Washington, DC 20554

**RE: SECTION 63.71 APPLICATION OF VERIZON TO DISCONTINUE POTS TELEPHONE
SERVICE (IN MASSACHUSETTS) (FILED 9/9/2026 AND POSTED 9/10/2026)
CONCERNS AND OBJECTIONS OF THE TOWN OF HAWLEY SELECTBOARD**

Dear Commissioners:

The Selectboard of Hawley, Massachusetts, strongly opposes Verizon's proposal to discontinue copper landline service in our region in favor of what it calls "modern" technology. We believe this transition will adversely affect our townspeople, for whom a landline is often a lifeline. Verizon's proposal appears to call not for eliminating home phone service but instead for replacing copper with other systems such as fiber and wireless. To its credit, Verizon assures us it will not charge customers more and supposedly will continue to support legacy systems like faxes and alarms. It also claims its systems will have battery backups for power outages. Its literature indicates these backups last approximately eight hours. These reassurances are better than nothing, but they do not put our minds at ease.

Hawley, like much of western Massachusetts, is very rural with low population density and many elderly residents. Copper landlines are not some bygone convenience here. They are a necessity, still popular with both older and younger families. Cell service is marginal—in many cases, nonexistent—in our mountainous landscape. (Note: major wireless carriers often overstate coverage in our area so we ask you to approach coverage maps with skepticism.) We are also prone to severe weather, which, with our abundance of trees, results in frequent power outages. The 2008 ice storm, Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, and a storm in February 2025 all led to outages lasting several days. During these outages, residents relied on landlines to check on neighbors and contact emergency services. Local government, including those emergency services, relied on the lines for continuity of operations as other systems failed.

Copper is an older technology, yet it continues to outperform the alternatives in important ways. Landlines are more dependable than wireless connections, which are sporadic at best here. Verizon does not currently offer fiber in most of western Massachusetts so we suspect that these unreliable wireless systems will be the alternative they offer. One advantage copper has over both wireless and fiber is that copper lines carry their own power so hardwired phones work during outages. In our experience, falling trees often break power lines, but the phone lines, lower on the pole, typically survive. We lose power several times a year, often for hours or even days. Widespread landline interruptions occur once a decade or less often. We also want to point out that an independent phone network that does not rely on the internet is a valuable backup in an increasingly vulnerable cyber environment.

Unfortunately, in a place like Hawley, an eight-hour battery backup or a wireless system that sometimes works just isn't good enough and certainly isn't as good as what we have now. We hope that you will give our concerns consideration in weighing Verizon's proposal and that you will find that the public interest necessitates maintaining the existing telephone infrastructure, at least for now.

Respectfully,


Williams Cosby


Hussain Hamdan


Robert MacLean