

Maine Public Utilities Commission



POLR Telephone Service is Being Deregulated in Your Community

July 1, 2016

By the end of August 2016, Maine Law will no longer require FairPoint Communications to offer Provider of Last Resort (POLR) Service in the communities of Portland, Lewiston, Bangor, South Portland, Auburn, Biddeford, and Sanford.¹

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is POLR? Incumbent local exchange carriers like FairPoint offer POLR service, which provides consumers the ability to receive a flat-rate service with voice-grade access to the public switched telephone network within a basic local calling area. It's the most basic form of telephone service.

Is this service being deregulated? Yes. In areas where telephone service has been deregulated, the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) will no longer have jurisdiction to regulate FairPoint's retail rates and will no longer oversee many aspects of FairPoint's telephone service.

Will I still be able to get telephone service from FairPoint? Yes. For one year, FairPoint must continue to offer current POLR customers a POLR-equivalent service in the seven municipalities named above. After that, FairPoint will still provide telephone service to the seven municipalities, but will no longer be required to offer a POLR-equivalent service.

Will FairPoint continue to provide Lifeline service? Yes. FairPoint will continue to provide Lifeline benefits to participating customers.

If there is a problem with my FairPoint service, who should I complain to? For one year, customers in the seven municipalities who receive POLR-equivalent service may bring complaints or disputes regarding their service to either FairPoint or the PUC's Consumer Assistance and Safety Division. After that, customers with complaints or disputes may contact FairPoint or the Maine Attorney General's Office.

Will my rates go up after deregulation? After the obligation to provide POLR service is removed, FairPoint will, for one year, offer current POLR service customers in the seven municipalities a POLR-equivalent service at current rates. After that, FairPoint may charge a new rate for telephone service.

Are there other choices for telephone service?

Yes. Customers may learn more about options in their community by checking out the National Broadband Map at www.broadbandmap.gov or the Maine Public Advocate's Office Ratewatcher Telecom Guide at www.maine.gov/meopa. You can also call the Public Advocate's Office at (207) 624-3687 for assistance.

Why is the Maine Public Utilities Commission involved? As a result of changes in law enacted by the 125th Maine Legislature, the only retail telephone service offering that falls within the PUC's regulatory authority is POLR service. The 127th Maine Legislature removed the PUC's regulatory authority in the seven most competitive municipalities in FairPoint's service area. Over time, the PUC's regulatory authority will be removed from an additional fifteen municipalities, provided FairPoint meets certain service quality standards.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Commission at (800) 452-4699.

¹ Public Law 2015, Chapter 462