



Telecom Order CRTC 2023-198

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Ottawa, 7 July 2023

Public record: Tariff Notice 578

TELUS Communications Inc. – Withdrawal of Do Not Disturb

Summary

The Commission **approves** TELUS Communications Inc.'s application to withdraw its Do Not Disturb function.

Application

1. The Commission received an application from TELUS Communications Inc. (TCI), dated 1 March 2023, in which the company proposed changes to its General Tariff CRTC 21461 for four items: item 300 – Call Management Services, item 302 – Residence Value Bundle, item 303 – Residence No Limits Bundle, and item 315 – Residence Bundle. Specifically, the company proposed to withdraw Do Not Disturb (DND).
2. DND is a residential calling feature for landline phone services that allows customers to block all incoming calls. DND was first introduced in 2000 as part of TCI's Advanced Intelligent Network (AIN) platform. TCI submitted that (i) the AIN platform has been obsolete for years and the risk of failure is increasing over time, (ii) there is limited demand for the service and demand is declining, and (iii) withdrawing DND will encourage customers to migrate to other products that are based on current technologies. The company also noted that the Commission had previously approved the withdrawal of other AIN-based calling features for these reasons, including Anonymous Caller Identification (approved in Telecom Order 2015-344), Advanced Call Forwarding and Call Gate (approved in Telecom Order 2016-282), and Caller Reveal (approved in Telecom Order 2021-156).
3. TCI submitted that the Commission had previously approved its request to destandardize DND in Telecom Order 2009-192 due to low customer demand for the feature. The company further submitted that it had filed a previous application with the Commission in February 2016 proposing to withdraw DND and other AIN-based calling features because the AIN platform was obsolete and at risk of failure. However, the company amended its application to propose the withdrawal of DND for business customers only and retain the service for residential customers, because residential customers expressed that they required a feature to block nuisance calls. These applications were approved in Telecom Order 2016-282.

4. TCI submitted that since Telecom Order 2016-282, it has made significant progress in addressing the need to block nuisance calls. Customers of TCI can block nuisance calls using Call Control (Basic), a free-of-charge call filtering feature launched in 2018. TCI submitted that robocalls¹ make up the majority of nuisance calls, and the Call Control (Basic) feature effectively blocks all robocalls by intercepting incoming calls and requiring callers to respond to a voice prompt by entering a random digit. Furthermore, the Call Control (Basic) feature allows customers to create an accepted caller list and a blocked caller list and save up to 25 numbers on each list. Customers who use the Call Control (Basic) feature can turn the feature on or off at any time.
5. TCI proposed to add Call Control (Basic) to all DND customers' accounts prior to withdrawing DND to ensure continuous access to a call filtering feature and mitigate the impact of the withdrawal on customers. TCI submitted that customers who use DND to temporarily silence their home phone could turn the phone ringer off manually or purchase a phone set with a silent/quiet mode.
6. TCI indicated that the withdrawal of DND would not negatively impact customers' monthly bills, and that customers currently paying a monthly rate for the feature would experience a decrease in their bills. TCI also indicated that, pursuant to Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-455-1, it sent a notice by mail to all impacted DND customers at the time of its application.
7. TCI requested an effective date of 1 September 2023. However, should the Commission be unable to render a decision before 1 June 2023, TCI requested an effective date three months following Commission approval.
8. The Commission received one intervention opposing TCI's application.

Intervention and reply

9. The intervener submitted that DND is a valuable service that allows customers to set their phone to automatically block calls for specific time periods. They further submitted that Call Control (Basic) is not an adequate substitute for DND because live nuisance callers could correctly respond to the voice prompt and cause the phone to ring at disruptive or inconvenient times.
10. In its reply, TCI submitted that the AIN platform is outdated and risk of failure will increase over time, which is why the company began its effort to withdraw AIN-based calling features eight years ago. The company further submitted that it would

¹ "Robocall" is the term sometimes used to describe calls made using Automatic Dialing-Announcing Devices, which is any automatic equipment incorporating the capability of storing or producing telecommunications numbers, used alone or in conjunction with other equipment, to convey a pre-recorded or synthesized voice message to a telecommunications number.

be in both the customer's and the company's best interest to migrate AIN-based features to services that are based on current and emerging technologies.

11. TCI submitted that Call Control (Basic) is an alternative to DND for blocking nuisance calls that was developed pursuant to the guidelines established in Compliance and Enforcement and Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-442. Call Control (Basic) can effectively block all robocalls, which currently make up a large portion of nuisance calls.
12. With respect to the intervener's concern about live nuisance calls coming through at disruptive or inconvenient times, TCI submitted that an alternative solution would be for the customer to purchase a phone set with a silent/quiet mode that allows users to specify when the phone ringer will be turned off.
13. TCI also acknowledged that its proposed alternatives to DND are not identical to DND in terms of functionalities. However, the company noted that in Telecom Decision 2008-22, the Commission considered that services to be withdrawn that rely on obsolete technology may not have substitutes that exactly match their functionality and price. TCI submitted that its suggested alternatives will meet the basic needs of DND customers, allowing them to block nuisance calls and silence their phones.

Commission's analysis

14. Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-455-1 sets out the requirements for the destandardization and withdrawal of tariffed services. In accordance with these requirements, TCI has informed affected customers of its proposal to withdraw DND and has provided rationale for its proposal.
15. In Telecom Orders 2015-344, 2016-282 and 2021-156, the Commission approved the withdrawal of other AIN-based services due to the platform's age, risk of failure, and lack of vendor support. The Commission considers that DND customers would be better served by services based on a more current and reliable platform.
16. DND was destandardized more than a decade ago due to low customer demand, and its customer base has continued to decline. TCI also previously filed an application to withdraw DND before amending the application to only withdraw the service for business customers, which the Commission approved in Telecom Order 2016-282. The Commission considers that remaining residential DND customers would therefore likely have been aware that DND could eventually be withdrawn.
17. TCI has identified several substitute services for DND, including (i) Call Control (Basic), which would be provided at no charge, and to which DND customers would be automatically transferred; (ii) customers purchasing a phone set with a silent/quiet mode, and (iii) manually turning the phone ringer off.
18. With respect to the intervener who submitted that Call Control (Basic) is not an adequate substitute for DND, the Commission acknowledges that the functionalities of the two services are not identical. Unlike DND, Call Control (Basic) will not block

all incoming calls at a specified time; it will only block callers who fail the voice prompt or are on the customer's blocked list. However, in Telecom Decision 2008-22, the Commission considered that services to be withdrawn that lack manufacturer support may not have substitutes that exactly match their functionality and price. The Commission also considers that a phone set with a silent/quiet mode would provide a substitute that addresses the concerns raised in the intervention, as it would prevent the phone from ringing at scheduled times.

19. TCI's proposal to migrate customers to Call Control (Basic) before withdrawing DND would provide customers with a feature to block robocalls, with no action required on the part of the customer and no increase to monthly bills. The Commission considers that adding this substitute service to customers' accounts prior to the withdrawal of DND would help ensure a smooth transition.
20. In light of the above, the Commission considers that TCI's proposal is reasonable.

Conclusion

21. In light of all of the above, the Commission **approves** TCI's application, effective **4 October 2023**.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *TELUS Communications Inc. – Withdrawal of Caller Reveal Service*, Telecom Order CRTC 2021-156, 4 May 2021
- *Empowering Canadians to protect themselves from unwanted unsolicited and illegitimate telecommunications*, Compliance and Enforcement and Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2016-442, 7 November 2016
- *TELUS Communications Company - Withdrawal of certain call management features*, Telecom Order CRTC 2016-282, 21 July 2016
- *Approval processes for tariff applications and intercarrier agreements*, Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-455-1, 19 February 2016
- *TELUS Communications Company – Withdrawal of Anonymous Caller Identification feature*, Telecom Order CRTC 2015-344, 29 July 2015
- *Procedures for filing confidential information and requesting its disclosure in Commission proceedings*, Broadcasting and Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-961, 23 December 2010
- Telecom Order 2009-192, 15 April 2009
- *Mandatory customer contract renewal notification and requirements for service destandardization/withdrawal*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2008-22, 6 March 2008