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At the same time, we are taking the lead in the industry to develop and implement new methods to allocate numbers fairly and efficiently. As this process unfolds, you may hear about something called number pooling. Right now, communications networks are programmed to route calls based on entire telephone exchanges. Under number pooling, numbers are assigned in smaller quantities. This will ultimately provide a means to efficiently allocate telephone numbers across the industry. It also means that all carriers' networks and systems must be reprogrammed to handle all aspects of a call that may start anywhere across North America and terminate in Massachusetts.

Over the long term, this technique is promising. However, it requires changes to operational, billing, switching and network administration systems by every single industry carrier -- large and small. The changes required are extensive, and industry experts don't believe the technique will provide a simple or quick solution to states needing more telephone exchange capacity in the near future. At Bell Atlantic, we'll do everything we can to make number pooling happen quickly, but no one should count on it to provide shelter from another new area code in Massachusetts.

If there's one piece of good news, it's the fact that the Massachusetts business and telecommunications marketplaces are thriving, so much so that demand for telephone exchanges -- as well as the number of companies providing communications services -- are at all time highs. That's positive news for our local economies, and indicative of how important communications services are to Massachusetts businesses and consumers.

With the great interest the last area code changes generated, and the vast effect this has on Massachusetts customers, we wanted to inform you as early as possible of some of the issues we'll be facing in the coming year. As the industry meetings are concluded and recommendations forwarded to the MDTE, we will keep you abreast of any new developments and their effects on Massachusetts residents and businesses.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please call me on (781) 224-2005.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter Bowman".

Peter Bowman
Regional Director - Public Affairs

24.
451 Main Street
Wakefield, MA 01880
(781) 224-2005

Peter Bowman
Regional Director - Public Affairs



March 9, 1998

The Honorable Sheila T. Russell
Mayor
City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mayor Russell:

Unprecedented demand for telephone exchanges may soon force telecommunications companies to begin rationing the assignment of new exchanges and planning efforts to add still more area codes in eastern Massachusetts. Based on current projections, and assuming conservation measures are put in place, more area codes in the 617 and 508 areas could be needed in as little as three years, and possibly sooner.

Of the 540 exchanges issued in the past year, nearly 90 percent are assigned to carriers other than Bell Atlantic. As a result of this demand, the industry will begin meeting next month to decide how to conserve the remaining telephone exchanges in the 508 and 617 areas. If carriers indicate continued strong demand for codes, at follow-up meetings we will try to reach agreement on how to add more area codes. The results of these meetings will be shared with the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications & Energy (MDTE) for its ultimate decision.

A lot has happened since AT&T, MCI and the cable companies advocated for the most recent 617 and 508 area code splits. We have more competitors. These companies have amassed 5.4 million numbers to serve their customers. More of our competitors' customers will be faced with changing numbers -- some within a year of getting those same numbers.

Bell Atlantic absolutely does not want to introduce any new area codes unless and until they are needed. If more area codes are needed, we hope our competitors think differently about solutions that are more friendly to Massachusetts customers. We continue to believe overlays provide the best long term solution. Overlays make the introduction of new area codes easier by allowing current customers to keep their existing numbers.

Consent Communication #24

S-167

Communication was received from Peter Bowman, Regional Director, Public Affairs BellAtlantic, transmitting information regarding interest in area coce changes and issues which will effect the Massachusetts residents and businesses.

In City Council March 16, 1998

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