

Briefs: Comptel challenges FCC ruling on Verizon

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The telecom industry group Comptel is challenging a recent FCC ruling that stripped a wide range of regulations from Verizon's high-capacity data services.

Comptel filed a petition for review Wednesday with the federal appeals court in Washington on the grounds the Federal Communications Commission failed to protect the public interest in its ruling.

"When the chairman of a federal agency is able to abdicate his responsibility to protect the public interest, and instead chooses to advance the private financial interests of a single giant corporation, it is time for the courts to step in and protect the public," Comptel President Earl Comstock said in a statement. "The FCC's default grant of forbearance makes Verizon the only telecommunications company in the entire country that is not subject to regulatory oversight."

FCC Chairman Kevin Martin ruled March 9 in favor of Verizon's request for relief from common carrier obligations despite critics who said the move would allow Verizon to raise its prices and block competitors' access to its network.

Comptel represents competitor companies that could be affected by the ruling.

Comstock said Martin's decision was based on "an unconstitutional delegation by Congress to an unelected federal official."

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