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For Immediate Release

Maryland PSC Recognizes September 12–18 as Lifeline Awareness Week *Discounted Phone Service Available to Qualified Residents*

(Baltimore)—Staying connected to local resources and emergency services can improve and possibly save many lives. The Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) wants residents to “stay connected” and is working with area organizations to spread awareness to those who need phone service, but can’t afford it.

During “Lifeline Awareness Week,” September 12–18, the PSC is encouraging citizens to check their eligibility for the Lifeline and Link-Up Assistance Programs, which offer discounts to help residents have access to basic local telephone service.

Under the federal Lifeline program, telephone customers who participate in or are eligible for certain public assistance programs are entitled to receive a basic telephone service discount of at least \$10 per month. Link-Up provides a 50 percent reduction in the telephone service installation charge, up to a maximum of \$30, for qualifying households that do not currently have telephone service.

Fortunately, the number of Marylanders taking advantage of Lifeline and Link-Up services has increased in recent years. Landline and wireless carriers in Maryland that provide Lifeline and Link-Up services received more than \$11 million in federal funds in 2010.

“The Lifeline and Link-Up services provide vulnerable citizens an affordable means to stay connected to vital emergency services and community resources. We encourage people to learn more and to sign up if they are eligible,” says Maryland Public Service Commission Chairman Douglas Nazarian.

Interested citizens can contact their local telephone company or visit the Lifeline website at www.lifelinesupport.org for more information. The Maryland Department of Human Resources can assist citizens in finding out if they qualify for the public assistance benefits that are required to enroll in Lifeline and Link-Up. Call 1-800-332-6347 to learn more about these benefits.

The PSC is the state agency in charge of regulating the rates and services of telephone companies operating in Maryland.

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