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Friday, April 24, 2009

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket 96-45 - Request of Tracfone Wireless, Inc. to be designated as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier

Dear Commissioner:

I am writing to support the application of TracFone Wireless, Inc. for the prompt designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) so that it may offer Lifeline and Link-Up service to low-income consumers, including the millions of Latino and Hispanic consumers living below the poverty line in states where TracFone's application is pending.

U.S. Census Bureau numbers show nearly 22 percent of Hispanics live below the poverty line. Even so, Hispanic households spend \$8 billion a year on telephone services, about \$833 per phone user, according to the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility and the FCC. Telecommunications services are extremely important to members of our community – for keeping in touch with family, finding and keeping job opportunities and for taking care of health care and emergency needs. These are just a few of the many reasons LULAC has been a supporter and advocate for the Universal Service Fund and the Lifeline and Link Up program.

We also recognize the role that prepaid cell phones play for Latinos. Industry reports show that Hispanics are about twice as likely to buy pre-paid wireless phones as are white Americans (14 percent versus 8 percent), according to a 2002 survey from the CPR Group. We have reviewed the TracFone Lifeline program, called SafeLink, which offers prepaid cell phones for free to consumers who qualify under the Lifeline program. Currently, TracFone is offering SafeLink in Florida, Tennessee, Massachusetts, Michigan, and in parts of New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. We support their efforts to provide the program in Alaska, California, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

SafeLink Wireless could help millions of Latinos obtain prepaid phone service -- at no cost to the states. SafeLink customers receive an allotted number of free airtime minutes per month, plus benefits that are important to our community, including:



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- Calling to more than 60 countries, with no additional charges including Mexico, Spain and many South American countries
- No credit checks and no early termination penalties or late payment fees
- 911 calls free of charge and without deducting minutes from the monthly allotment
- Unused minutes do not expire at the end of the month, and are "carried over" to the following month

Customers could take advantage of the same features that other consumers currently enjoy with cell phones, such as call waiting and caller ID, plus features currently not offered with landline providers under their Lifeline programs, such as voice mail and nationwide long distance.

LULAC applauds the Safelink offering and the right of consumers to obtain affordable wireless phone service. We support the TracFone petition and encourage a swift roll out of the SafeLink program. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rosa Rosales
LULAC National President