



NEWS RELEASE

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NJBPU Approves Pro-Consumer Merger of CenturyLink, Level 3 Communications

Merger provides competitive pricing greater access to services-

TRENTON, N.J. – Today, the [New Jersey Board of Public Utilities](#) (Board) approved the merger between [CenturyLink](#) and [Level 3 Communications, LLC](#). The merger will allow CenturyLink to compete more competitively in the Enterprise Business segment and increase business offerings by utilizing the Level 3 broadband fiber optic network.

Today's approval is the result of an agreement between the Company, Board Staff and [Rate Counsel](#) and provides consumer protections. The company has also agreed to build out their facilities to maximize the number of locations providing broadband internet access in several underserved areas.

"The merger benefits New Jersey consumers creating more competition, greater access to services and will accelerate deployment of broadband facilities in less served areas of the state," said [Richard S. Mroz](#), Board President.

The provisions of the merger include:

- The company will continue to compete in Business Data Services (BDS) markets in Verizon New Jersey service territory for a minimum of three years.
- CenturyLink will notify the Board and Rate Counsel if there is any net loss of customer-facing jobs in New Jersey greater than 15%, and provide detailed explanation within ten days of such events for a period of three years.
- Provide broadband services in the Hope, Blairstown, and Columbia exchanges that are to be completed no later than year-end 2018.
- Comply with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Connect America Fund Phase 2 program.
- Provide a liaison for community outreach and education on their broadband service availability.

On December 16, 2016, Level 3 and CenturyLink submitted a verified joint petition requesting approval of its merger with the Board. Subsequent to the petition, Rate Counsel submitted comments

to the Board recommending approval of the merger under specific conditions. A response was sent by the companies that the conditions requested by the Rate Counsel were not needed and inconsistent with Board precedent. On August 7, 2017, a stipulation of settlement was entered into by all parties involved, which resolved all matters of concern.

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