

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Consumer Alert: New Hampshire Office of Consumer Advocate  
Warns Consumers To Carefully Read Their Telephone Bills**

The Consumer Advocate, F. Anne Ross, reminds consumers about the importance of reading their telephone bill. Consumers need to be sure that they are being charged the correct rate for their in-state and out-of-state toll telephone calls.

While special rate plans offer lower calling rates, some telephone companies have been known to switch consumers to the company's higher default rate when consumers do not pay their telephone bill on time.

The difference between special rate plans and a company's default rate can be staggering. For example, Verizon offers special plans as low as 5¢ per minute for in-state and out-of-state tolls calls. Their new in-state default rate, however, is 30¢ per minute during peak hours and 18¢ during off-peak hours. The same default rate applies to out-of-state calls.

Rates for other companies are:

MCI 5¢ per minute (Nationwide Plan – with a \$6.95 monthly fee) versus default in-state rate of up to 25¢ per minute for on-peak hours and 35¢ state-to-state during weekdays.

ATT 5¢ per minute (One Rate Plus – with a \$6.95 monthly fee) as opposed to default rates of 29¢ per minute.

Sprint 7¢ per minute (7¢ Anytime – with a \$5.95 monthly fee) versus a default flat rate of 40¢ per minute.

This means consumers may be paying much more per minute than is available on a special rate plan. If consumers examine their telephone bill and find they are being billed more than their special rate plan, they should first contact the company and try to get the issue resolved then call the Consumer Affairs Division of the Public Utilities Commission at 1-800-852-3793 toll free for NH or 603-271-2431 or visit their website at [www.puc.nh.gov](http://www.puc.nh.gov).

If consumers have not contacted a telephone carrier to switch to a special rate plan, they should seriously consider doing so. There are rates available as low as 4.25¢ per minute with no monthly fee. For more information on available plans, please visit [www.abelltolls.com](http://www.abelltolls.com).

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