



# Office of the People's Counsel District of Columbia



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July 7, 2003

**Elizabeth A. Noël**  
People's Counsel

RECEIVED

Re: ET Docket No. 03-104

JUL - 7 2003

Marlene H. Dortch  
Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals  
445 Twelfth Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Please find enclosed for filing in the above-referenced proceeding, an original and four (4) copies of the Office of the People's Counsel's "Comments to the Federal Communications Commission Supporting the Deployment of Broadband Over Powerline Systems".

If there are any questions concerning this matter, please contact the undersigned at (202) 727-3071.

Sincerely yours,

Laurence C. Daniels  
Assistant People's Counsel

Cc: Certificate of Service

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

**ET Docket No. 03-104**

**The Federal Communications Commission's Inquiry Regarding Current Carrier Systems,  
Including Broadband Over Powerline Systems**

I, hereby certify that on this 7<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2003, a copy of the Office of the People's Counsel's "Comments to the Federal Communications Commission Supporting the Deployment of Broadband Over Powerline Systems" was delivered by hand or first-class mail to the following parties:

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Potomac Electric Power Co.  
701 9<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
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Washington, DC 20004

Professor Eli Noam  
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809 Uris Hall



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Laurence C. Daniels  
Assistant People's Counsel

**BEFORE THE  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, DC**

<b>In the Matter of</b>	)	
	)	<b>ET 03-104</b>
<b>Inquiry Regarding Carrier Current</b>	)	
<b>Systems, Including Broadband Over</b>	)	
<b>Power Line Systems</b>	)	

**Comments of the Office of the People's Counsel,  
Washington, DC Supporting the Deployment  
of Broadband Over Powerline Systems**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Federal Communications Commission ("FCC" or "Commission") issued a Notice of Inquiry ("NOI") on April 28, 2003, requesting comments on the current state of Broadband Over Powerline Systems ("BPL") technology to determine if the Commission needs to amend its rules to facilitate the deployment of BPL.<sup>1</sup> In response to the NOI, the Office of the People's Counsel-Washington, DC ("OPC-DC" or "Office") respectfully submits Comments in support of Broadband Over Powerline technology.

**II. DISCUSSION**

OPC-DC wholeheartedly supports the FCC in its efforts to facilitate the deployment of BPL for consumers. BPL is being touted by providers, regulators and industry analysts as the service that will allow for the delivery of broadband technology to all consumers. Supporters of BPL also claim that the service will be a viable competitor to broadband service provided over cable or DSL lines. In light of these claims, OPC-DC supports the deployment of BPL as it has the potential to improve the District of Columbia's telecommunications landscape for consumers

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<sup>1</sup> Notice of Inquiry, ET Docket No. 03-104, 68 Fed. Reg. 28182, (issued May 23, 2003).

in two respects – 1) may provide a solution to the issue of the “digital divide” that currently exists in the District of Columbia and 2) BPL may increase the number of providers of broadband technology to consumers in the District of Columbia.

**1. BPL Technology May Provide an Answer to the District’s Digital Divide Issue**

In 2000, the Office petitioned the District of Columbia Public Service Commission (“DCPSC”) requesting the agency to develop a public record on Bell Atlantic-DC’s deployment of Digital Subscriber Line (“DSL”) in the District of Columbia. The proceeding included a public hearing where several witnesses, including Bell Atlantic-DC (now Verizon-DC), appeared before the DCPSC to express their need for affordable advanced telecommunications service. The testimony from Bell Atlantic-DC made it clear that due to “technical limitations” inherent with DSL technology, DSL can not provide broadband telecommunications service throughout all parts of the District of Columbia. The unfortunate result is a digitally divided city.

After conducting research of BPL technology, the Office learned that BPL appears to overcome the technical problems inherent with the deployment of DSL. Additionally, OPC-DC learned that there is a trial of the BPL in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. Indeed, this People’s Counsel has volunteered her home to be a trial location for this service. Based upon this information, the Office is believes it may be appropriate and timely for the DCPSC to open a proceeding to investigate the technical and legal/regulatory aspects of deploying BPL in the District of Columbia. OPC-DC will pursue this locally.

**2. BPL Deployment May Increase the Number of Broadband Providers in the District of Columbia**

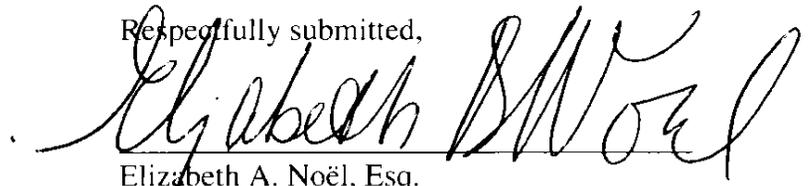
Once the regulatory path is cleared for BPL providers, it will increase the number of vendors who can serve residential consumers and small businesses in the District of Columbia. In that BPL technology utilizes the city’s electrical grid to provide an advanced

telecommunications service. it opens up another means by which DC consumers can receive advanced telecommunications services. Currently, there are 12 active telecommunications service providers in the District of Columbia. Yet, few, if any of these providers deliver advanced telecommunications services via the telecommunications network throughout the entire city. If providers of BPL technology can serve most if not all of the District of Columbia's residential consumers over the electrical grid, they would be viable competitors to traditional advanced telecommunications service providers. This type of increased competition will aid DC consumers in that they will have additional options from which to receive advanced telecommunications services. Moreover, an increased competitive environment may also encourage traditional telecommunications service providers to make improvements to their network so that they too can provide advanced telecommunications services throughout all parts of the city.

### III. CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, for the foregoing reasons, OPC-DC supports the FCC's efforts to facilitate the deployment of BPL technology nationwide.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: July 7, 2003

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