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Verizon Communications Inc.'s (NYSE:VZ) biggest union, the Communications Workers of America (CWA), claims the carrier is not repairing its broken copper line networks in the Northeast. Instead, the carrier is pushing an increasing number of its customers to its wireless Voice Link home phone service.

In an attempt to prove its point, the CWA, which represents 35,000 employees, has filed a number of Freedom Of Information Act appeals with utility regulators in Washington, D.C., New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. The CWA claims the requested data on the maintenance, repair, and installation of Verizon's landline services will indicate that the largest US wireless carrier has failed to meet its commitment toward network maintenance.

Dennis Trainor, CWA's vice president for District 1, said in a release: "As a public utility in these states, Verizon has a duty to maintain services for all customers. But we've seen how the company abandons users, particularly on legacy networks, and customers across the country have noticed their service quality is plummeting."

The CWA realizes that increased repair work would call for increased workload, and thus mentions the example of the decision taken by the New York state back in 2005 for eliminating automatic penalties for lapses in the quality of Verizon's telephone service. There had been hope though that the new entrants into the telephone service market would drive competition, which would ultimately lead to maintenance of the landlines in a working condition.

The CWA nevertheless asserts that Verizon was resolving only 1.2% of its service complaints within every 24 hours by 2010. This denotes just a small proportion of the 80% of the state's clearance standard. The union alleges that the state then manipulated its stats to eliminate 92% of the consumers from the wireless leader's service quality measurements. In response, Verizon said that the claims made by the CWA about the carrier abandoning its copper line networks are sheer nonsense. Verizon also said that the CWA is only striving to pressurize the carrier ahead of the impending contract negotiations with the telecom giant.

This is not the first instance Verizon is being accused of drawing its customers away from the conventional copper line networks. In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the wireless leader attempted to implement its Voice Link service in place of some landlines in Long Island, due to which the business and residential customers were left with part of the entire functionality they previously had. Verizon eventually decided to roll out its FiOS fiber service in place of the copper line networks that the hurricane had damaged.

Moreover, last year Verizon was blamed for intentionally neglecting its landline service in California, while aiming to pressurize its customers to shift to the carrier's FiOS service. However, the company has decided to trade off its landline service in California with different service providers. During the passing year, Verizon has taken several steps to divest its wireline service in order to focus on its relatively more profitable wireless business. Earlier this year, the telecom giant vended off its wireline operations in Texas, Florida, and California for \$10 billion

to Frontier Communications Corp.



127 State Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101
717.214.2000 • bcapa.com

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