



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
BY HIS EXCELLENCY
CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU, GOVERNOR**

Executive Order 2023-07

An Order Establishing the “Don’t Overload the Code” Initiative to Extend the 603 Area Code and to Prepare New Hampshire Businesses for the Eventuality of an Additional Area Code

WHEREAS, the 603 Area Code was created in 1947 as one of the original 86 numbering plan areas (NPA) in the North American Number Plan and has been the sole and exclusively assigned area code for New Hampshire since that time; and

WHEREAS, when in 1998 the North American Numbering Plan Administrator declared extraordinary jeopardy for the 603 area code with a projected exhaust date of the first quarter of 2000, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) successfully petitioned the Federal Communications Commission for Additional Delegated Authority to Implement Number Optimization Measures in the 603 Area Code and implemented thousand-number-block pooling, which removed the 603 area code from extraordinary jeopardy by 2004; and

WHEREAS, when a 2011 NPA exhaust analysis projected that the 603 area code would be exhausted of telephone numbers and a second area code would be required for New Hampshire as early as 2013, the PUC and operating companies within the 603 Area Code cooperated to conserve telephone numbers, thereby extending the expected exhaustion to at least 2032; and

WHEREAS, despite implementation of conservation measures, there has been significant growth in the use of telephone numbers, resulting in a 2023 NPA exhaust analysis that projects the 603 area code will exhaust and a second area code will be required for New Hampshire as early as 2027; and

WHEREAS, after 75 years, the 603 Area Code is an iconic symbol of New Hampshire, has come to both signify and symbolize residents and businesses being located in or originating from New Hampshire, and has become part of the New Hampshire identity; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of a second area code is likely to have significant cultural and economic consequences for residents and businesses located in-state; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Energy (DOE) is now charged with conserving telephone numbers and preparing for the implementation of a second area code.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU, GOVERNOR of the State of New Hampshire, by the authority vested in me by Part II, Article 41 of the New Hampshire Constitution, do hereby order, effective immediately, that:

1. The Department of Energy (DOE) shall open a proceeding within 90 days of this Order to investigate durable strategies, inclusive of reclaim assigned by unused telephone numbers, for lengthening the useful life of the 603 Area Code and extending its exhaustion date, making all telecommunications providers over which the DOE has jurisdiction parties to that investigation.
2. The DOE shall submit a report of its findings to the Governor within 12 months of this Order and shall act expeditiously upon those findings.
3. The Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) shall, within 90 days of this Order, commence a study of business practices relating to number usage and business costs and opportunities that may result from the implementation of a second area code. BEA shall provide any information requested by the DOE in the course of the DOE's investigation and work cooperatively with DOE to help educate businesses with regard to number conservation strategies identified by DOE.

Given under my hand and seal at the Executive Chambers in Concord, this 31st day of October, in the year of Our Lord, two thousand and twenty-three, and the independence of the United States of America, two hundred and forty-seven.



GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE