



May 20, 2020

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED AND EMAIL

To: Jonathan Spalter
President & CEO
USTelecom – The Broadband Association
601 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20001

Cc: Patrick Halley
phalley@ustelecom.org

**Re: Official Correspondence from the Federal Communications Commission and
Federal Trade Commission**

Dear Mr. Spalter,

On behalf of the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission, we express gratitude for the USTelecom Industry Traceback Group’s prompt response to identify and mitigate fraudulent robocalls that are taking advantage of the national health crisis related to the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Robocalls and malicious spoofed calls that prey on consumer fear and anxiety during a national emergency are outrageous and extremely harmful. Our agencies are committed to taking aggressive action against anyone that engages in or facilitates such calls.

We are aware that the USTelecom Industry Traceback Group has recently identified multiple COVID-19-related calling campaigns affecting consumers in the United States. Specifically, one campaign is a government impostor scheme falsely claiming to originate with the United States Social Security Administration threatening a termination of benefits; one includes fraudulent offers of government financial relief or refunds; a third falsely claims that recipients have been charged for tech support services but may get a “refund” by responding to the robocall. Several others attempt to capitalize on consumers’ anxieties about the economic impact of the pandemic with offers of debt relief or payment reduction services (hereinafter the “Robocalls”).

The USTelecom Industry Traceback Group has helped identify the following entities as responsible for originating or transmitting the Robocalls:

Originator(s):

Intelepeer Cloud Communications LLC (Franklin Fawzi, 155 Bovet Rd., Suite 405, San Mateo, CA 94402);

Voice Are Us, LTD (United Kingdom)

Gateway Provider(s):

PTGi International Carrier Services, Inc. (Craig Denson, 4115 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 203, Washington, DC 20016);

RSCoM LTD (Vitaly Potapov, 238 Wellington Street East, Suite 210, Aurora ON L4G 1J5, Canada)

We must take swift action to protect consumers from further harm from these unlawful, malevolent robocalls during this national emergency. Therefore, concurrent with this letter, we have requested (1) the above-named gateway providers, and (2) Intelepeer Cloud Communications LLC, to stop routing and transmitting such calls within 48 hours. We also have notified them that, where appropriate, we may pursue legal action against those facilitating, routing, or transmitting such robocall traffic.

Accordingly, if after 48 hours of the release of this letter, any of the above-listed gateway or originating provider(s) continues to route or transmit the above-named originators' robocalls on its network—in other words, if it continues to facilitate the entry of unlawful robocalls onto American networks—the FCC will: (1) authorize other U.S. providers to block all calls coming from that gateway or originating provider; and (2) authorize other U.S. providers to take any other steps as needed to prevent further transmission of unlawful calls originating from the originator(s) listed above. The FCC will also authorize U.S. providers to extend the obligation to prevent transmission of these unlawful calls with all entities with which they contract or that handle traffic in any part of the call path. Nothing in this letter prohibits any provider from exercising its rights to take immediate action to block unlawful calls pursuant to existing legal authority; we encourage and expect providers to take an active role in managing their networks and client relationships to protect consumers from harmful, illegal robocalls and spoofed calls.

The work of the USTelecom Industry Traceback Group is essential to combatting the deluge of unlawful robocalls and protecting consumers and is particularly vital in swiftly identifying scammers who attempt to defraud consumers during the COVID-19 outbreak. We thank you for your commitment to the public interest.

Please direct any inquiries regarding this letter to Kristi Thompson of the FCC at Kristi.thompson@fcc.gov or 202-418-1318 or to James Evans of the FTC at james.evans@ftc.gov or 202-326-2026.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rosemary C. Harold".

Rosemary C. Harold
Chief, Enforcement Bureau
Federal Communications Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lois C. Greisman".

Lois C. Greisman
Associate Director, Division of Marketing
Practices
Federal Trade Commission