

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 6, 2011

Mr. Lowell McAdam  
President and CEO  
Verizon  
140 West Street  
New York, NY 10007

Mr. Daniel Mead  
President and CEO  
Verizon Wireless  
15 Federal Road  
Brookfield, CT 06804

Dear Mr. McAdam and Mr. Mead:

Verizon and Verizon Wireless recently began sending notices to their customers announcing a newly created program regarding targeted advertising. In a letter to its customers, Verizon explained that the changes “will improve the ability of advertisers to reach our Verizon Online customers based on your physical address.” These changes are significant and raise important privacy questions.

According to these notices, Verizon and Verizon Wireless plan to use additional types of customer information to create business and marketing reports and tailor advertisements based on a customer’s geographic area. Verizon and Verizon Wireless also plan to share customer information with outside companies for their marketing reports. The information that Verizon and Verizon Wireless intend to share includes which websites their customers visit, what plans they subscribe to, and the location of consumers’ devices.

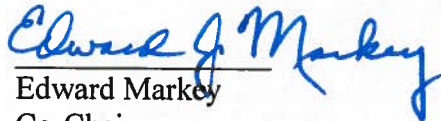
The notices state that individually identifiable information will not be disclosed to third parties and that customers can opt out of allowing advertisers to send advertisements based on a customer’s geographic area. Nevertheless, we remain concerned about these significant changes to the companies’ privacy policies. Specifically, disclosure to third parties of customers’ location information and the websites they visit – even on an aggregate basis – merits further clarification from Verizon and Verizon Wireless. Accordingly, as co-Chairmen of the Congressional Bi-Partisan Privacy Caucus, we request that Verizon and Verizon Wireless provide us responses to the following questions:

1. In the service update, Verizon indicates that consumers “may” see ads of greater relevance. Please explain why Verizon and Verizon Wireless decided to create this program if it is possible the consumer will not benefit from it. How will Verizon benefit from this new program?

2. As noted in the service updates, customers who do not wish to have their personal information used as part of these new data sharing programs can opt out. Why did the companies choose to require customers to opt out rather than enabling them to affirmatively opt in to participate in the data sharing programs?
3. How do these new programs differ from the current program? Is Mobile Usage and Consumer information used in Verizon's current program?
4. How do these new programs compare to common industry practices?
5. Does Verizon or Verizon Wireless plan to sell, rent or otherwise make available this customer information to outside companies? If yes, to which firms?
6. How do these new programs comport with Section 222 of the Communications Act of 1934: Privacy of Customer Information?
7. If Verizon and Verizon Wireless assert that Section 222 permits disclosure or access to aggregate customer information, how are the companies ensuring that only aggregate, rather than individually identifiable, customer information will be used or disclosed as part of the new data sharing program?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. If you have any questions, please have a member of your staff contact Joseph Wender in Congressman Markey's office (202-225-2836) or Emmanuel Guillory in Congressman Barton's office (202-225-2002).

Sincerely,



Edward Markey  
Co-Chairman  
Congressional Bi-Partisan Privacy Caucus



Joe Barton  
Co-Chairman  
Congressional Bi-Partisan Privacy Caucus