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STATE FILES SUIT AGAINST ACS FOR UNFAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES

(Juneau, AK) – Attorney General Gregg Renkes filed a complaint against ACS Wireless and its holding company, ACS Communications, Inc. for violations of Alaska Consumer Protection Act in connection with ACS' promotion of its "Voice Connect" wireless product earlier this year.

ACS promoted the new service through a "negative option" or "opt out" campaign, which required customers to notify the company if they did not want it. The company automatically billed customers $2.00 if they failed to notify ACS that they did not want "Voice Connect" by the required deadline. The charge continued each month until the customer cancelled the plan.

"Consumers should never have to pay for a product or service not expressly requested by the consumer," said Attorney General Gregg Renkes.   "These types of marketing tactics are inherently deceptive and open the door for a variety of consumer abuses. We want to make it clear that this kind of marketing will not be tolerated in Alaska."

The state's complaint asks the court to prohibit ACS from engaging in this kind of opt-out marketing in the future. It also asks the court to make ACS give refunds to consumers who were signed-up for "Voice Connect" as a result of this marketing tactic and pay the state civil penalties of $5,000 for each consumer who was a target of this conduct.

Alaska Communications Systems Group, Inc. (ACS) provides long distance and facilities-based local telephone, wireless, data, network, and Internet services throughout Alaska. The Anchorage-based company serves residents in 74 communities throughout the state, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai/Soldotna, Kodiak, and Sitka. It sells services to three-fourths of the state's population.

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