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## Where Is Bmore Fios?

Monday, March 15, 2010 - John Patti and Scott Wykoff

A coalition of civil rights organizations, consumer advocates, churches, neighborhoods, businesses, and labor unions is launching a bus billboard advertising campaign at 12 noon on Tuesday, outside the Maryland headquarters of Verizon in downtown Baltimore.

The coalition is called "[Where Is Bmore FIOS?](#)" because it is demanding that Verizon treat Baltimore City the same as every other major jurisdiction in Maryland and deploy its next-generation fiber-optic data communication technology here. The coalition claims that Verizon has already deployed this new network in Montgomery, Prince George's, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Howard, Harford, and Charles counties as well as cities along the mid-Atlantic seaboard such as Richmond, Washington, Philadelphia, and New York.

Matthew Weinstein, Progressive Maryland Baltimore Region Director, says Verizon's failure to do so in Baltimore threatens to create a digital divide affecting Baltimore's communities and businesses. Weinstein says "for some reason they've decided to essentially red line the city for this new high-speed technology which is really the next great leap forward in data communication technology and that is going to put the city, its businesses, its communities at a significant disadvantage."

Verizon says it is not deploying Fios service in Baltimore City or any other new areas in Maryland or across the country at this time because it wants to focus on delivering Fios services in communities where cable franchises are already approved and the fiber network is already being built.

Verizon spokesperson Sandy Arnett says "as you may imagine, we have extensive deployment obligations in several states so what we're looking at right now is trying to fulfill some of those existing obligations before we continue to branch out with our Fios services." But Arnett says "just because we're not deploying Fios in a particular area now doesn't mean we won't do so in the future. We just can't say right now when it will happen but certainly Baltimore is and continues to be a strong market for us."

Arnett says there have been informal talks with Baltimore City but no negotiations.

Verizon says it must first have a cable franchise approved in a community before Fios can be deployed. Arnett says Verizon is not "red lining" Baltimore City because they never look at race or ethnicity or income as factors in making their decisions.

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