

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, to consider revisions to the universal service fund contribution methodology.)) Application No. NUSF-100 / PI-193

POST-HEARING COMMENTS OF COX NEBRASKA TELCOM, LLC

Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC hereby makes this filing in the above-captioned docket, as allowed by the Nebraska Public Service Commission (“Commission”) at the conclusion of the hearing held in the same matter on August 30, 2017.

As an initial matter, by responding herein, Cox does not change or deviate from the position previously conveyed through filed comments and pre-filed testimony that it is ill-advised for the Commission to proceed independently, prior to the Federal Communications Commission (the “FCC”) taking action on this subject. Having said that, Cox files these comments to respond to the testimony delivered by the Nebraska Rural Independent Companies (“RIC”), and specifically by Mr. Ken Pfister.

Mr. Pfister conveyed the RIC's support for changing to a connections-based methodology. As a part of his testimony, Mr. Pfister stated according to the billing vendor utilized by his company¹, implementation of a per-connections methodology would not be costly or difficult.² Mr. Pfister further stated since carriers' billing systems presently bill flat-rate, per-line costs for charges such as the telephone relay service and 911, that billing system change costs should be minimal.

¹ Mr. Pfister testified he is employed by Great Plains Communications, a Nebraska-based company located in Blair, Nebraska.

² NUSF-100 / PI-193, Hearing Aug. 30, 2017, Testimony of Ken Pfister on behalf of the Nebraska Rural Independent Companies, TR at pg. 80.

2. *Id.*

RECEIVED

eNebraska Rural

**Nebraska
Public Service Commission**

First, the Commission has not announced what billing structure or surcharge rate it will utilize. The Commission advised these topics, and other implementation details such as establishing the budget were not a part of the August 30 hearing. Therefore, Mr. Pfister's assurances related to billing simplicity and the minimal costs incurred are at best, premature, given it is unknown what billing structure will be used.

The Commission's February 22, 2017 Order proposed a business customer surcharge that would be levied on a tiered-revenue basis.³ On March 24, 2017, Commission Staff submitted Pre-Filed Testimony presenting three other billing alternatives for consideration.⁴ And most recently, a uniform flat-rate levied on all connections, with no differentiation between classes of customers was suggested at the NUSF-100 workshop held on July 11, 2017. Quite simply, the Commission has not yet made a decision how to bill and collect revenue via a per-connection methodology.

Second, Mr. Pfister is correct that carriers presently bill TRS and 911 surcharges, but that does not draw a parallel that a NUSF methodology will be easy and at a low cost since the billing structure has not yet been determined. In fact, it was clearly conveyed by the Commission that implementation details were not a part of the August 30 hearing and would be discussed at a later time. It is not possible to reach the conclusion espoused by Mr. Pfister that billing costs will be minimal and that implementation will be easy for carriers when critical details remain unresolved.

In conclusion, Cox stresses that additional input through comments and/or workshops to discuss implementation details should occur. The ultimate billing structure and rate are critical to the success, or failure of making this change. Cox continues to encourage the Commission to make this be as simple as possible for carriers to implement. As Level 3 witness Ms. Hollick

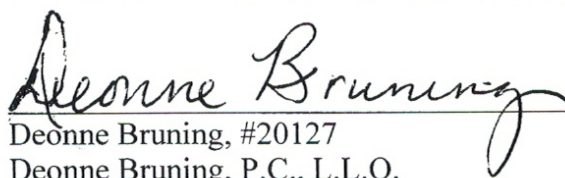
³ NUSF-100 / PI-193, Commission Order and Order Seeking Further Comment and Setting Hearing, entered February 22, 2017, Appendix A – pg. 1.

⁴ NUSF-100 / PI-193, Pre-Filed Testimony of Cullen Robbins on behalf of the Commission Staff, filed March 24, 2017, pg. 4.

testified, the Commission needs to be mindful how products are priced to the end-user and design the rate methodology accordingly to avoid rate shock to customers.⁵ If the Commission moves towards a connections methodology, clear definitions, a thorough understanding of implementation issues, and the actual impact felt by end-user customers must be discerned.⁶

Respectfully submitted this 15th of September, 2017.

ATTORNEY FOR COX NEBRASKA TELCOM, LLC

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Deonne Bruning", written over a horizontal line.

Deonne Bruning, #20127
Deonne Bruning, P.C., L.L.O.
2901 Bonacum Drive
Lincoln, NE 68502
(402) 440-1487

⁵ NUSF-100 / PI-193 Hearing Aug. 30, 2017, Testimony of Pamela Hollick on behalf of Level 3, TR 45-46.

⁶ *Id.*

Certificate of Service

The undersigned hereby certifies that on this 15th day of September, 2017 an original and five copies of Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC's Post-Hearing Comments in Application NUSF-100, PI-193 were hand-delivered to the Nebraska Public Service Commission, and a copy of the same was e-mailed to the following:

Nebraska Public Service

Shana Knutson shana.knutson@nebraska.gov

Sue Vanicek sue.vanicek@nebraska.gov

Brandy Zierott brandy.zierott@nebraska.gov

Association of Teleservices International, Inc.

Matthew Ottemann mottemann@mcgrathnorth.com

Rural Independent Companies ("RIC")

Paul Schudel pschudel@woodsaitken.com

Thomas Moorman tmooman@woodsaitken.com

Rural Telecommunications Coalition of Nebraska ("RTCN")

Andy Pollock apollock@remboltlawfirm.com

Troy Kirk tkirk@remboltlawfirm.com

Charter Fiberlink – Nebraska L.L.C.

Kennard Woods kwoods@fh2.com

Michael Moore michael.moore@charter.com

Russ Westerhold rwesterhold@FraserStryker.com

Windstream Communications

Jon Bruning jon@bruninglawgroup.com

Kathryn Spohn Katie@bruninglawgroup.com

Steve Meradith stephen.meradith@windstream.com

Qwest Corporation d/b/a Century Link QC

Jill Vinjamuri Gettman jgettman@gettmanmills.com

Norm Curtright norm.curtright@centurylink.com

CTIA – The Wireless Association

Benjamin Aron baron@ctia.org

Matt DeTura mdetura@ctia.org

Loel Brooks lbrooks@brookspanlaw.com

Frontier Communicaitons

Scott Bohler scott.bohler@ftr.com

Level 3 Communications

Pamela Hollick pamela.hollick@level3.com


Deonne Bruning