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# Qwest Settlement

Arizona Corporation Commission

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## RUCO Calls For Fair Process In Evaluation of Qwest Settlement

RUCO calls for the Arizona Corporation Commission (Commission) to pursue a fair process in its evaluation of any settlement presented to it on Qwest's (formerly US West) pending rate application. Recently, the press has reported that Qwest and the Commission Staff are negotiating a settlement in Qwest's pending rate application. The Commission's Utilities Division Director was reported to have noted that a settlement provides an opportunity to move away from the Commission's traditional rate-of-return regulation. In testimony filed at the Commission earlier this year, the Utilities Division's witness, from Strategic Policy Research, Inc.; clients, proposed a price cap plan that would move Qwest from traditional regulation to reliance on competitive markets to determine prices and service offerings.

A hearing on Qwest's rate application is currently scheduled to begin on Thursday, October 19. No settlement agreement has yet been filed with the Commission. On Monday, October 16, the Commission will hold a procedural conference with the parties to the case to discuss the scheduling matters. RUCO is concerned that if the Commission Staff and Qwest reach a settlement, an adequate opportunity should be provided to the parties and the public to review and comment on any settlement. Further, a radical change in regulation of the state's largest local exchange carrier should be carefully and fully evaluated by the Commission after an opportunity for fair and full public scrutiny.

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