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Arizona Corporation Commission
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APR 23 2003



IN THE MATTER OF U S WEST
 COMMUNICATIONS, INC.'S COMPLIANCE
 WITH § 271 OF THE
 TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996.

DOCKET NO. T-00000A-97-0238

**QWEST'S RESPONSES TO COMMENTS
 OF ESCHELON**

In this document, Qwest will respond to the e-mails sent by Karen Clausen of Eschelon on March 11, 2003 and on April 9, 2003. In the April 9, 2003, Ms. Clausen commented that Qwest had not contacted Eschelon regarding the process for switching Eschelon's few remaining UNE-E lines in Arizona to the mechanized billing process that Qwest has developed for UNE-E.

Since that e-mail, Andrew Crain of Qwest attempted to contact Ms. Clausen to discuss the matter. After an unproductive exchange of e-mails, Mr. Crain and Ms. Clausen did make contact by telephone on April 21, 2003. The telephone conversation lasted for approximately an hour, and appeared to be productive. Qwest promised to obtain certain information for Eschelon, and the parties will meet in the near future to again discuss this matter.

In her March 11 e-mail, Ms. Clausen makes inaccurate allegations concerning the statements made in Qwest's Comments to the Staff's Report on the July 30-31 Workshop

(Report One -Operations Support Systems Related Issues). In her e-mail, Ms. Clausen even accuses Qwest of violating Rule 11, asking: "On what good faith, Rule 11 basis does Qwest represent that 'Eschelon has to date not agreed . . . to further discuss.'"

Ms Clausen has taken these two sentence fragments out of context. What Qwest actually said is:

Qwest has taken all reasonable actions to resolve this issue. Qwest has made several attempts to resolve this issue with Eschelon, with the last attempt being made on November 14, 2002. Qwest in its last attempt again outlined its solution for Qwest to generate service orders to convert the embedded base, as well as making an offer of training to Eschelon and to project manage the conversion to minimize service interruption. Eschelon has to date not agreed to the conversion or to meet to further discuss.

This paragraph is entirely accurate. Qwest made its proposal regarding a process to convert Eschelon's embedded base to the mechanized billing process and reiterated this proposal in a letter on November 14, 2002. That letter states:

For the existing embedded base of UNE-E Qwest stands ready, willing and able to complete this mechanization as well. At the 11th hour, however, Eschelon has reversed its position and now states it does not wish to proceed with mechanization of the embedded base. Eschelon's stated rationale appears to be that a *potential* risk to the embedded base of UNE-E customers *perceived* to be associated with the implementation of the project is beyond an acceptable level. Qwest disagrees that there is a significant *bona fide* risk associated with the implementation of the mechanization as planned. Qwest acknowledges, as it always has in response to Eschelon's request for a "guarantee" of perfection in the context of this implementation, that human error is a possibility, on the part of Eschelon's personnel and Qwest's personnel, in any implementation process that involves some manual steps.

In an e-mail sent out on November 14, 2002, Ms. Clausen declined Qwest's offer to convert Eschelon's embedded base of UNE-E customers to the mechanized billing process.

Since that time, the parties have met on several occasions to discuss issues. No productive discussions occurred regarding this subject. For example, during the meetings in

Minnesota to which Ms. Clausen refers in her e-mail, Eschelon stated that it did not want to discuss this issue unless Qwest had changed its position.

Eschelon's position regarding the conversion process makes no sense. Qwest's proposal to convert the embedded base of the customers would not result in adverse impacts to Eschelon's end user customers. The lines would not be taken out of service – the only change would be to the records within Qwest's systems. The conversion would not even impact Eschelon – Qwest offered to submit the service orders to convert the accounts. This is exactly the process that Lynn Powers of Eschelon testified was required:

As discussed, one of the advantages of the November 15, 2000, interconnection agreement amendment was supposed to be that Qwest would convert Eschelon's base from resale to UNE-E/UNE-Star without the necessity of Eschelon placing individual LSRs to convert each customer. (Powers Affidavit Para 10 June 7, 2002).

That is exactly what Qwest has done – developed a process by which the accounts would be converted to the mechanized billing process without the need for Eschelon to submit LSRs.

Qwest even offered to project-manage the effort, which Eschelon has admitted significantly reduces chance of potential error. (Transcript 7-31-02, Karen Clausen, pp. 433-34). During the workshop, Eschelon even asserted that its performance measurement results were more accurate than Qwest's because the Qwest results included migration orders handled on a project basis, which had low error rates.

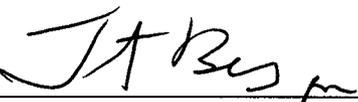
Inexplicably, Eschelon has instructed Qwest not to convert to the mechanized billing process because of a hypothetical concern about errors that could occur in the project-managed conversion process – even though Eschelon has admitted that such processes have low error rates. In an e-mail on December 19, Ms. Clausen reiterated Eschelon's refusal to consider Qwest's proposal to convert Eschelon's UNE-E lines to the mechanized billing process:

Yes. This is the advice we received from Jeff Thompson at Qwest (in the emails I forwarded to you previously), and we are not aware of any changes in circumstance since then that would change that decision. We are still hoping to receive a more workable solution from Qwest on UNE-E mechanization, and we will work the two issues (base and new lines) together.

Since that time, Eschelon and Qwest have met on more than one occasion, and until the phone discussion between Qwest and Eschelon on April 21, 2003, Eschelon has steadfastly refused to consider Qwest's proposal to convert Eschelon's UNE-E customers to the mechanized billing process.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 23rd day of April, 2003.

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