

OPEN MEETING



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**MEMORANDUM**

Arizona Corporation Commission

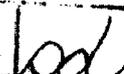
**DOCKETED**

DEC 01 1998

TO: THE COMMISSION

FROM: Utilities Division

DATE: November 30, 1998

DOCKETED BY 

RE: 1999 ARIZONA UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND SURCHARGE (DOCKET NO. R-00000-97-0137)

The Arizona Universal Service Fund (AUSF) was established by Decision No. 56639, September 22, 1989, and was designed to help off-set high basic local telephone rates in rural areas. One half of the funding was derived from local exchange carriers based on the number of access lines, and half of the funding was derived from interLATA and intraLATA interstate minutes of use. U S WEST Communications, Inc. (U S WEST) was designated as the Plan Administrator. Any company requesting Universal Service funding was required to receive authorization from the Commission in a rate case. To date only Citizens Telecommunications Company of the White Mountains, Inc., (Citizens) (formerly Contel of the West, Inc.) is receiving Universal Service Fund money in the amount of \$775,620 annually, Decision No. 56657, October 10, 1989.

On June 23, 1995, the Commission issued Decision No. 59124, approving new rules for competitive telecommunications services. A.A.C. R14-2-1113 of the competitive rules required that the Commission establish an intrastate universal service fund to assure the continued availability of basic telephone service at reasonable rates. On March 24, 1996, the Commission adopted rules, A.A.C. R-14-2-1201 *et. seq.*, establishing a new universal service fund mechanism. These rules expanded criteria for drawing from the fund.

Under the new rules A.A.C. R14-2-1204(A), the AUSF is funded by all telecommunications service providers that interconnect to the public switched network. One half of the AUSF funding requirement is collected through a surcharge paid by providers of basic local exchange service, wireless, paging, and other Commercial Mobile Radio Service providers that interconnect with the public switched network. These entities are known as "Category One" providers, A.A.C. R14-2-1204(B)(1). One half of the funding requirements are collected from providers of intrastate toll service. These entities are known as "Category Two" providers, A.A.C. R14-2-1204(B)(2).

The AUSF surcharge is equal to the total Category One funding requirement, divided by the total; number of access lines and interconnecting trunks that were in service for all Category One providers as of October 1 of the previous year, A.A.C. R14-2-1204(B)(1)(a), plus a growth factor calculated at half of the estimated annual percentage growth in access lines, A.A.C. R14-2-1205(B).

**THE COMMISSION**

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For Category Two providers, the surcharge is a percentage of the Category Two AUSF funding requirement equal to that providers share of the total intrastate toll revenue for the previous year ended July 31, A.A.C. R14-2-1204(B)(2)(a), plus a growth factor calculated at half of the estimated annual percentage growth in toll revenues, A.A.C. R14-2-1205(B). Providers offering both Category One and Category Two services are assessed charges based on both the number of access lines and percentage of toll revenues, A.A.C. R14-2-1404(B)(2).

The Universal Service Fund Rules mandate that a new Plan Administrator be put in place no later than July 1, 1997, A.A.C. R14-2-1212. On February 11, 1997, the National Exchange Carriers Association (NECA) was selected to administer the expanded AUSF on behalf of the Commission. NECA is a not-for-profit association whose principal mission is to manage programs designed to accomplish universal telephone service goals. NECA requested data from all Arizona telecommunications providers for use in calculating the surcharges that would be applied to all telecommunication providers for 1997. Based on NECA's calculations, the 1997 monthly surcharge for Category One providers from June through December was set at \$0.025386 per access line and \$0.25386 per trunk line; for Category Two providers the 1997 surcharge was set at 0.2958 percent of toll revenue, Decision No. 60169, April 18, 1997. The collection of these amounts from June through December, 1997, will raise sufficient funding to cover the amount of AUSF funding that Citizens has been authorized to receive.

NECA requested data from all Arizona telecommunications providers for use in calculating the surcharges that would be applied to all telecommunications providers for 1998. Based on NECA's calculations, the 1998 monthly surcharge for Category One providers was set at \$0.013450 per access line and \$0.13450 per trunk line; for Category Two providers the 1998 monthly surcharge was set at 0.1881 percent of toll revenue, Decision No. 60547, December 18, 1997. The collection of these amounts over the year 1998 will raise sufficient funding to cover the amount of AUSF funding that Citizens has been authorized to receive.

NECA has requested data from all Arizona telecommunications providers for use in calculating the surcharges that would be applied to all telecommunications providers for 1999. NECA has calculated that the 1999 monthly surcharge for Category One providers is \$0.012110 per access line and \$0.12110 per trunk line; for Category Two providers the 1999 monthly surcharge is 0.1391 percent of toll revenue. The collection of these amounts over the year 1999 will raise sufficient funding to cover the amount of AUSF funding that Citizens has been authorized to receive.

THE COMMISSION

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Page 3

Staff has reviewed the proposed 1999 monthly surcharges, finds them to be just and reasonable and in the public interest, and therefore recommends approval with 1999 monthly fund contributions beginning January 20, 1999.

*Ray T. Williamson*

Ray T. Williamson

Acting Director

Utilities Division

RTW:KFR:djg/CK

ORIGINATOR: Keith F. Rogers

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**BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION**

JIM IRVIN  
Commissioner - Chairman  
RENZ D. JENNINGS  
Commissioner  
CARL J. KUNASEK  
Commissioner

IN THE MATTER OF THE NOTICE OF )  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE )  
ARIZONA UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND.)  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

DOCKET NO. R-00000-97-0137

DECISION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

ORDER

Open Meeting  
December 10 and 11, 1998  
Phoenix, Arizona

BY THE COMMISSION:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Arizona Universal Service Fund (AUSF) was established by Decision No. 56639, September 22, 1989, and was designed to help offset high basic local telephone rates in rural areas. One half of the funding was derived from local exchange carriers based on the number of access lines, and one half of the funding was derived from interLATA and intraLATA intrastate minutes of use. U S WEST Communications, Inc. (U S WEST) was designated a Plan Administrator.

2. Any company requesting Universal Service funding must first have received authorization from the Commission in a rate case or other method as the Commission may prescribe. To date, only Citizens Telecommunications Company of the White Mountains, Inc. (Citizens) is receiving universal service fund money in the amount of \$775,620 annually. Decision No. 55657, October 10, 1989.

3. On June 23, 1995, the Commission issued Decision No. 59124, approving new rules for competitive telecommunications services. A.A.C. R14-2-1113 of the competitive rules required that the Commission establish an intra-state universal service fund to assure the continued availability of basic telephone service at reasonable rates.

1           4.    On March 24, 1996, the Commission adopted Arizona Universal Service Fund  
2 Rules A.A.C. R14-2-1201 through R14-2-1217 establishing a new universal service fund  
3 mechanism. The AUSF rules expanded the types of telecommunications providers that  
4 contribute to the AUSF and revised the eligibility criteria for drawing from the fund.

5           5.    Under the new rules A.A.C. R14-2-1204(A), the AUSF is funded by all  
6 telecommunications service providers that interconnect with the public switched network. One  
7 half of the AUSF funding requirement is collected through a surcharge paid by providers of basic  
8 local exchange service, wireless, paging, and other Commercial Mobile Radio Service providers  
9 that interconnect with the public switched network. These entities are known as "Category One"  
10 providers, A.A.C. R14-2-1204(B)(1). One half of the funding requirements are collected from  
11 providers of intrastate toll service. These entities are known as "Category Two" providers.  
12 A.A.C. R14-2-1204(B)(2).

13           6.    The AUSF surcharge is equal to the total Category One funding requirement,  
14 divided by the total number of access lines and interconnecting trunks that were in service for all  
15 Category One providers as of October 1 of the previous year, A.A.C. R14-2-1204(B)(1)(a), plus  
16 a growth factor calculated at half of the estimated annual percentage growth in access lines,  
17 A.A.C. R14-2-1205(B). For Category Two providers, the surcharge is a percentage of the  
18 Category Two AUSF funding requirement equal to that provider's share of the total intrastate toll  
19 revenue for the previous year ended July 31, A.A.C. R14-2-1204(B)(2)(a), plus a growth factor  
20 calculated at half of the estimated annual percentage growth in toll revenues, A.A.C. R14-2-  
21 1205(B). Providers offering both Category One and Category Two services are assessed  
22 charges based on both the number of access lines and percentage of toll revenues, A.A.C. R14-2-  
23 1404(B)(2).

24           7.    The AUSF rules mandate that a new Plan Administrator be put in place no later  
25 than July 1, 1997. On February 11, 1997, the National Exchange Carriers Association (NECA)  
26 was selected to administer the expanded AUSF on behalf of the Commission. NECA is a not-  
27 for-profit association whose principal mission is to manage programs designed to accomplish  
28 universal telephone service goals.

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1           8.   NECA requested data from all Arizona telecommunications providers for use in  
 2 calculating the surcharges that would be applied to all telecommunication providers for 1997.  
 3 Based on NECA's calculations, the 1997 monthly surcharge for Category One providers from  
 4 June through December was set at \$0.024586 per access line and \$0.25386 per trunk line; for  
 5 Category Two providers the 1997 monthly surcharge was set at 0.2958 percent of toll revenue,  
 6 Decision No. 60169, April 18, 1997. The collection of these amounts from June through  
 7 December, 1997, raised sufficient funding to cover the amount of AUSF funding that Citizens  
 8 was authorized to receive.

9           9.   NECA requested data from all Arizona telecommunications providers for use in  
 10 calculating the surcharges that would be applied to all telecommunication providers for 1998.  
 11 Based on NECA's calculations, the 1998 monthly surcharge for Category One providers from  
 12 January through December was set at \$0.013450 per access line and \$0.13450 per trunk line; for  
 13 Category Two providers the 1998 monthly surcharge was set at 0.1881 percent of toll revenue,  
 14 Decision No. 60547, December 18, 1997. The collection of these amounts from January through  
 15 December, 1998, will raise sufficient funding to cover the amount of AUSF funding that Citizens  
 16 was authorized to receive.

17           10.   NECA requested data from all Arizona telecommunications providers for use in  
 18 calculating the surcharges that would be applied to all telecommunications providers for 1999.  
 19 NECA calculated that the 1999 monthly surcharge for Category One providers is \$0.012110 per  
 20 access line and \$0.12110 per trunk line; for Category Two providers the 1999 monthly surcharge  
 21 is 0.1391 percent of toll revenue. The collection of these amounts over the year 1999 will raise  
 22 sufficient funding to cover the amount of AUSF funding that Citizens has been authorized to  
 23 receive.

24           11.   Staff has reviewed the proposed 1999 monthly surcharges finds them to be just  
 25 and reasonable and in the public interest, and therefore recommends approval with 1999 monthly  
 26 fund contributions beginning January 20, 1999.

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**CONCLUSION OF LAW**

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1. The Commission has the authority to authorize pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 40-202, -203, -204, -250, -321, -322, -328, -329, -331, -332, -361, -365, and -367; the Arizona Constitution, Art. 15, sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9; and the Arizona Universal Service Fund Rules, A.A.C. R14-2-1201 through R14-2-1217.

2. The Commission has jurisdiction over the subject matter.

3. The 1999 surcharges for Category One and Category Two providers meet the requirements of the AUSF rules, are just and reasonable and in the public interest.

ORDER

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the 1999 monthly Arizona Universal Service Fund surcharge for Category One providers is \$0.012110 per access line and \$0.12110 per trunk line.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the 1999 monthly Arizona Universal Service Fund surcharge for Category Two providers is 0.1391 percent of toll revenue.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Decision shall become effective immediately, with 1999 monthly fund contributions beginning January 20, 1999.

**BY ORDER OF THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION**

\_\_\_\_\_  
COMMISSIONER - CHAIRMAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
COMMISSIONER

\_\_\_\_\_  
COMMISSIONER

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, JACK ROSE, Executive Secretary of the Arizona Corporation Commission, have hereunto, set my hand and caused the official seal of this Commission to be affixed at the Capitol, in the City of Phoenix, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JACK ROSE  
Executive Secretary

DISSENT \_\_\_\_\_

RTW:KFR/CK

1 SERVICE LIST FOR: ARIZONA UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND

2 DOCKET NO.: R-00000-97-0137

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