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BEFORE THE UTAH PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Utah Affordable Base
Rate for Telecommunications Services

DOCKET NO. 16-R360-01

**COMMENTS
OF THE AT&T COMPANIES**

The certificated AT&T Companies, together with AT&T wireless providers, including AT&T Corp., Teleport Communications America, LLC, New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC, d/b/a AT&T Mobility, and Cricket Wireless, LLC (collectively, the “AT&T Companies”) submit these Comments in response to the Request for Comments dated March 4, 2016 (the “Request”). The Request invites comments as to whether Utah's base rate for USF eligibility should be raised in conjunction with the expected federal increase to \$18, occurring on July 1, 2016. The AT&T Companies believe that the federal rate benchmark should be made a prerequisite for obtaining high-cost support from the Utah USF fund.

COMMENTS

The AT&T Companies recommend that the Commission raise the Affordable Base Rate for all Utah Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (“ETCs”). ETCs should first access available federal funding before resorting to state USF fund to subsidize the provision of service in high-

cost areas, consistent with the express policy of the Utah legislature, which in setting up the Utah USF in UC § 54-8b-15, provided:

To the extent not funded by a federal universal service fund or other federal jurisdictional revenues, the fund shall be used to defray the costs, as determined by the commission, of any qualifying telecommunications corporation in providing public telecommunications services. . . . (Emphasis added)

Since the federal rate benchmark is a requirement for federal eligibility, it follows that the minimum state rate benchmark should be at least as high as the federal minimum. If a provider does not have rates that are at or above the federal rate floor, it is disqualifying itself from some federal high-cost support and, in that case, under no circumstances should the Utah USF make up the difference in lost federal support nor should the Utah USF make up for the revenues the ILEC has forgone as a result of not having rates at the rate floor.

The AT&T Companies appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments.

Submitted March 24, 2016.

By: _____/s/_____
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MAILING CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that on the 24th day of March 2016, I caused to be served a copy of the COMMENTS OF THE AT&T COMPANIES on the following person by overnight delivery and electronic mail:

Melissa Paschal
Utah Public Service Commission
Heber M. Wells Building, 4th Floor
160 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
Email: psc@utah.gov

I also hereby certify that on the 24th day of March 2016 I caused to be served a copy of the COMMENTS OF THE AT&T COMPANIES on the following persons by electronic mail:

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