BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF UTAH

In the Matter of the Petition of Q LINK WIRELESS LLC)))
) Docket No
for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications)
Carrier in the State of Utah)
)

PETITION OF Q LINK WIRELESS LLC FOR DESIGNATION AS AN ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER IN THE STATE OF UTAH

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I. INTRODUCTION

Q LINK WIRELESS LLC ("Q LINK" or the "Company"), by its undersigned counsel, and pursuant to Section 214(e)(2) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (the "Act")¹, Sections 54.101 through 54.207 of the Rules of the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC"),² and the rules and regulations of the Public Service Commission of Utah ("Commission"), this Petition for Designation hereby submits Eligible Telecommunications Carrier ("ETC") in the State of Utah. Q LINK seeks ETC designation solely to provide Lifeline and Link-Up service to qualifying Utah consumers; it will not seek access to funds from the federal or state Universal Service Fund ("USF") for the purpose of providing service to high cost areas.³ As demonstrated herein, and as certified in Exhibit 1 to this Petition, Q LINK meets all the statutory and regulatory requirements for designation as an

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(2)

² 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.101-54.207.

³ Given that Q LINK only seeks support from the low-income program and does not seek any high-cost support, ETC certification requirements for the high-cost program are not applicable to the Company. Q LINK has been designated as an ETC in Maryland and currently has applications for ETC designation pending with the Federal Communications Commission, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin; no such petitions have been denied.

ETC in the State of Utah. Rapid grant of Q LINK's request, moreover, would advance the public interest because it would enable the Company to commence much needed Lifeline and Link-Up services to low-income Utah residents as soon as possible. Accordingly, the Company respectfully requests that the Commission expeditiously approve this Petition for ETC designation.

All correspondence, communications, pleadings, notices, orders and decisions relating to this Petition should be addressed to:

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II. BACKGROUND

A. Company Overview

Q LINK is a Delaware Limited Liability Company. Its principal office is located at 499 Sheridan Street, Suite 300, Dania, Florida 33004. Q LINK is a provider of commercial mobile radio service ("CMRS") throughout the United States and was acknowledged as a CMRS provider in the State of Utah on January 9, 2012. Q LINK provides prepaid wireless telecommunications services to consumers by using the Sprint Nextel ("Sprint") network on a wholesale basis to offer nationwide service, and obtains from Sprint the network infrastructure and wireless transmission facilities to allow the Company to operate as a Mobile Virtual Network Operator ("MVNO").

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 $^{^4\,}$ Q LINK was organized in the State of Delaware on August 25, 2011.

Q LINK's prepaid wireless services that are affordable and easy to use are attractive to low-income and lower-volume consumers, providing them with access to emergency services and a reliable means of communication that can be used both at home and while traveling to remain in touch with friends and family and for contacting prospective employers. Q LINK offers consumers simple and affordable prepaid calling plans, a variety of prepaid service plans, easy-to-use handsets and high-quality customer service. Given its pricing and marketing strategy and the demographics of other, similar MVNOs' customers, Q LINK anticipates that many of its customers will be from low-income backgrounds and will not previously have enjoyed access to wireless service because of economic constraints, poor credit history, or sporadic employment. Q LINK does not conduct credit checks or require customers to enter into long-term service contracts as a prerequisite to obtaining wireless service.

By providing affordable wireless plans and quality customer service to consumers who are otherwise unable to afford them, or were previously ignored by traditional carriers, Q LINK will expand the availability of wireless services to many more consumers, which is the principal reason that Congress created the universal service program.

B. Proposed Universal Service Offering

Q LINK has the ability to provide all services and functionalities supported by the universal service program, as detailed in Section 54.101(a) of the FCC's Rules (47 C.F.R. § 54.101(a)) throughout Utah. The Company will provide Lifeline and Link-Up services to qualifying customers requesting this service throughout Utah pursuant to the universal service program and in accordance with 47 C.F.R. § 54.202(a)(1). Q LINK intends to be a leader in the prepaid marketplace by offering consumers exceptional value and competitive amounts of voice usage at all price points.

- i. **Lifeline Offering.** The Company's Lifeline service offering will provide customers with the same features and functionalities enjoyed by all other Q LINK prepaid customers, with one notable exception: prepaid Lifeline services will be free of charge. As Exhibit 2 demonstrates, the Company's Lifeline service will provide customers with one of the following three (3) Lifeline Plans:
 - a. Plan 1: 68 Monthly Minutes. Under Plan 1, eligible customers enjoy
 68 anytime minutes that rollover and free international long distance.⁵
 Text messaging is at the rate of one-third of one minute (3 texts = 1 minute).
 - b. Plan 2: 125 Monthly Minutes. Under Plan 2, eligible customers enjoy
 125 anytime minutes that rollover. Text messaging is at the rate of one minute (1 text = 1 minute).
 - c. <u>Plan 3: 250 Monthly Minutes</u>. Under Plan 3, eligible customers enjoy 250 anytime minutes. Minutes do not rollover. Text messaging is at the rate of one minute (1 text = 1 minute).

Customers have the capability of purchasing additional bundles of minutes in denominations as low as \$9.99, \$19.99, \$29.99, and \$59.99.⁶ Airtime replenishment cards will be made available at retail outlets frequented by low income customers throughout the Company's Service Area. In addition to free voice services, all of Q Link's Lifeline plans will include a free handset and the following Custom Calling features: Caller ID, Call Waiting, and Voicemail. Customers may use their minutes to place domestic long distance calls at no

⁵ If you are on Plan 1, there is no additional charge for international long distance to countries designated at www.qlinkwireless.com.

 $^{^{6}}$ \$9.99 = 50 minutes, \$19.99 = 120 minutes, \$29.99 = 200 minutes, and \$59.99 = 450 minutes.

additional charge. Calls to 911 emergency services are always free, regardless of service activation or availability of minutes. Calls to Q Link customer service are also free.

Customers can change their plan on their monthly plan date, without penalty, should they determine that another plan better meets their needs or if their needs change. Q Link does not impose burdensome credit checks, long-term service contracts, or roaming charges

ii. **Link-Up Offering.** Link-Up Assistance is in the form of a "reduction in the carrier's customary charge for commencing telecommunications service for a single telecommunications connection" and "shall be half of the customary charge or \$30.00, whichever is less". Consistent with FCC requirements, Q LINK will use Link-Up support to reduce the Company's \$60.00 standard wireless activation charge by \$30.00. Qualifying subscribers may request a deferred payment schedule for the remaining installation charges, thus allowing subscribers to obtain service without being required to pay any fees to activate service with Q LINK. As such, there is no up-front connection charge applicable to Q LINK Lifeline and Link-Up customers.

Attached hereto as Exhibit 2 is a summary table of the Company's proposed Lifeline and Link-up service offerings. As Exhibit 2 demonstrates, the Company's Lifeline and Link-up offerings will not only allow feature-rich mobile connectivity for qualifying subscribers at no cost to the subscriber, but also will bring a variety of rate plans into the reach of eligible customers that are comparable in minutes and features to those available to post-paid wireless subscribers – but at low Lifeline rates and without a the burden of credit checks or service contracts. Q LINK's prepaid offering will be an attractive alternative for consumers who need

⁷ 47 C.F.R. § 54.411(a)(1).

the mobility, security, and convenience of a wireless phone, but who are concerned about usage charges or long-term contracts.

C. Plan Enrollment

Customers interested in obtaining information on the Lifeline and Link-Up programs will be directed to a toll-free telephone number and to the Company's website, which will contain information regarding the Company's Lifeline and Link-Up service plans, including a detailed description of the programs and state-specific eligibility criteria. Customers may then request that an enrollment form be mailed to them, or they can download a form from the internet. Applicants must complete the enrollment form, which will include a place where applicants must attest and certify under penalty of perjury that they satisfy the requisite eligibility criteria. In addition, each applicant is required to certify under penalty of perjury, at the time of application and annually thereafter, that they are head of their household and receive Lifeline-supported service only from Q LINK. If not applying in person, the applicant must return the signed enrollment form and all supporting documentation to the address provided by Q LINK. Processing of consumers' applications, including review of all application forms and relevant documentation, will be performed under the Company's supervision by managers experienced in the administration of the Lifeline and Link-Up programs.

D. Prevention of Waste, Fraud and Abuse

Q LINK recognizes the importance of safeguarding the USF. Therefore, the Company has implemented the following 60-day non-usage policy in an effort to avoid waste, fraud, and abuse of the program. If no usage appears on a Q LINK Lifeline customer's account during any continuous 60-day period, the Company will promptly notify the customer that the customer is no longer eligible for Q LINK Lifeline service subject to a 30-day grace period. During the 30-day grace period, the customer's account will remain active, but Q LINK will engage in outreach

efforts to determine whether the customer desires to remain on the Company's Lifeline service. If the customer's account does not show any customer-specific activity during the grace period, Q LINK will promptly deactivate Lifeline services and cease to seek reimbursement from the USF for that customer. Customers that have been deactivated may participate in the Company's Lifeline service in the future by reapplying and re-establishing eligibility.

III. THE COMMISSION HAS JURISDICTION TO DESIGNATE WIRELESS ETCS

Section 214(e)(2) of the Act provides state public utility commissions with the "primary responsibility" for the designation of ETCs. 8 Although Section 332(c)(3)(A) of the Act prohibits states from regulating the entry of or the rates charged by any provider of commercial mobile service or any private mobile service, this prohibition does not allow states to deny wireless carriers ETC status.⁹ Therefore, the Commission has the authority to designate Q LINK as an ETC. Pursuant to this authority, the Commission has historically participated in determining whether to grant ETC status to an applying carrier, including any requesting wireless carrier. 10 Under the Act, a state public utility commission with jurisdictional authority over ETC designations must designate a common carrier as an ETC if the carrier satisfies the requirements of section 214(e)(1). Q LINK recognizes that Section 214(e)(1)(A) of the Act states that ETCs shall offer services, at least in part, over their own facilities and that Section 54.201(i) of the FCC's Rules (47 C.F.R. § 54.201(i)) prohibits state commissions from designating as an ETC a telecommunications carrier that offers services exclusively through the resale of another carrier's services. As discussed in Section IV.A below, Q LINK has the capability to provide some of the supported services using its own facilities, and will thus fulfill the requirement that it provide

⁸ 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(2).

⁹ USF Order, at 8858-59, ¶ 145.

¹⁰ See In the Matter of the Petition of WWC Holding Co., Inc., for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier, Report and Order, Docket No. 98-2216-01 (July 21, 2000).

service using a combination of its own facilities and resale of another carrier's services. Therefore, the Commission has the authority to act under Section 214(e)(2) of the Act and to grant Q LINK's request for designation as an ETC throughout the State of Utah.

A. The ETC Designation Request Is Consistent with Recent Commission Precedent

Q LINK's request for ETC designation to participate in the Lifeline and Link-Up programs is consistent with the Commission's recent designation of Virgin Mobile as an ETC.

In its decision, the Commission determined that Virgin Mobile satisfied all of the necessary eligibility requirements and that designation of a prepaid wireless provider as an ETC would serve the public interest. Q LINK requests that the Commission expeditiously process its ETC Petition so that it can quickly commence providing qualifying low-income Utah customers with affordable USF-supported wireless services during these challenging economic times for all state residents. Designation of Q LINK as an ETC would further competition for wireless Lifeline and Link-Up services and would offer eligible consumers an additional choice of providers for accessing telecommunications services, representing a significant step towards ensuring that all low-income consumers share in the many benefits associated with access to wireless services.

IV. Q LINK SATISFIES THE REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGNATION AS AN ETC

Section 254(e) of the Act provides that "only an eligible telecommunications carrier designated under section 214(e) shall be eligible to receive specific federal universal service support." Section 214(e)(2) of the Act authorizes state commissions, such as the Commission, to designate ETC status for federal universal service purposes and authorizes the Commission to

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See In the Matter of Virgin Mobile USA, L.P. Petition for Limited Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier, Docket No. 10-2521-01, Report and Order (May 25, 2011).

designate wireless ETCs.¹² Section 214(e)(1) of the Act and Section 54.201(d) of the FCC's rules provide that applicants for ETC designation must be common carriers that will offer all of the services supported by universal service, either using their own facilities or a combination of their own facilities and the resale of another carrier's services. Applicants also must commit to advertise the availability and rates of such services.¹³ As detailed below, Q LINK satisfies each of the above-listed requirements.

A. Q LINK Will Provide Service Through Resale And Its Own Facilities

Q LINK, in its provision of wireless services, will rely on a combination of resold services which the Company will obtain from underlying wireless providers that currently operate their own networks, as well as Company-owned facilities, thus allowing Q LINK to meet the FCC's test that requires an ETC to provide services, at least in part, through a "combination of its own facilities and resale of another carrier's services". Q LINK's facilities provide the Company the ability to route interexchange services, operator services, directory assistance services, as well as minutes of use for local service provided at no additional charge to end users, which satisfies the FCC's definition for supported services.

Currently, there is no state or federal definition or requirement as to the number of, or the amount of, the supported services that an ETC must offer via its "own facilities." Additionally,

¹² See Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, First Report and Order, 12 FCC Rcd 8776, 8858-59, ¶ 145 (1997) ("USF Order").

¹³ See 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(1) and 47 C.F.R. § 54.201(d)(2).

¹⁴ See 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(1)(A).

¹⁵ See Exhibit 3 for the Company's Facilities Schematic.

¹⁶ See In the Matter of Connect America Fund, A National Broadband Plan for Our Future, Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, High-Cost Universal Service Support, Developing an Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, Lifeline and Link-Up, Universal Service Reform – Mobility Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WC Docket No. 05-337, CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, WT Docket No. 10-208, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, (rel. Nov. 18, 2011) ("USF/ICC Transformation Order"), para. 78; see also Revised Section 47 C.F.R. § 54.101(a) (redefining supported services).

Federal law does not require any particular level of facilities. The FCC stated in its Universal Service Order, 12 FCC Rcd 8853, FCC 97-157 ("USF Order"), at para. 169 that:

We adopt the Joint Board's analysis and conclusion that a carrier need not offer universal service wholly over its own facilities in order to be designated as eligible because the statute allows an eligible carrier to offer the supported services through a combination of its own facilities and resale. Although the Joint Board did not reach this issue, we find that the statute does not dictate that a carrier use a specific level of its "own facilities" in providing the services designated for universal service support given that the statute provides only that a carrier may use a "combination of its own facilities and resale" and does not qualify the term "own facilities" with respect to the amount of facilities a carrier must use. For the same reasons, we find that the statute does not require a carrier to use its own facilities to provide each of the designated services but, instead, permits a carrier to use its own facilities to provide at least one of the supported services.

In affirming its own decisions, the FCC chose to continue to define the term "own facilities" as "any physical components of the telecommunications network that are used in the transmission of the services that are designated for support" (emphasis added). The Communications Act's definition of "network element" matches that of the FCC and defines a "network element" as "a facility or equipment used in the provision of a telecommunications service. Such term also includes features, functions, and capabilities that are provided by means of such facility or equipment, including subscriber numbers, databases, signaling systems, and information sufficient for billing and collection or used in the transmission, routing, or other provision of a telecommunications service." All facilities-based carriers have and use network elements. ¹⁹

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¹⁷ See 47 C.F.R. § 54.101; 47 C.F.R. § 54.201(e).

¹⁸ See 47 U.S.C. § 153(29).

¹⁹ Only ILEC network elements can be designated as "unbundled" under 47 U.S.C. § 251(c)(3) using the criteria in 47 U.S.C. § 251(d)(2), but all facility-based carriers, including nondominant wireline and wireless carriers also have "network elements."

B. Q LINK Is a Common Carrier

CMRS providers like Q LINK are treated as common carriers for regulatory purposes.²⁰

C. Q LINK Will Provide All Required Services and Functionalities

Q LINK offers, or will offer upon designation as an ETC in Utah, all of the services and functionalities required by Section 54.101(a) and Section 54.202(a) of the FCC's Rules (47 C.F.R. § 54.101(a) and 47 C.F.R. § 54.202(a)) including the following:

1. Voice Grade Access to the Public Switched Network

Q LINK provides voice grade access to the public switched telephone network ("PSTN").

2. Minutes of Use for Local Service

As part of the voice grade access to the PSTN, an ETC must provide minutes of use for local service at no additional charge to end users. The FCC has determined that a carrier satisfies the local usage requirements when it offers customers rate plans containing varying amounts of local usage.²¹ The Company offers a variety of rate plans that provide its customers with minutes of use for local service at no additional charge.

3. Access to Emergency Services

Q LINK provides 911 and E911 access for all of its customers, to the extent the local government has implemented 911 or E911 systems. The Company also complies with the FCC's

Implementation of Sections 3(n) and 332 of the Communications Act, Regulatory Treatment of Mobile Services, GN Docket No. 93-252, Second Report and Order, 9 FCC Rcd 1411, 1425 ¶ 37, 1454-55 ¶ 102 (1994) (wireless resellers are included in the statutory "mobile services" category, and providers of cellular service are common carriers and CMRS providers); 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(1)(A) ("mobile services" providers are common carriers); see also PCIA Petition for Forbearance for Broadband PCS, WT Docket No. 98-100, Memorandum Opinion and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 13 FCC Rcd 16857, 16911 ¶ 111 (1998) ("We concluded [in the Second Report and Order] that CMRS also includes the following common carrier services: cellular service, ... all mobile telephone services and resellers of such services.")

²¹ See e.g., Farmers Cellular, Inc., CC Docket No. 96-45, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 18 FCC Rcd 3848, 3852 ¶ 9 (2003); Pine Belt Cellular, Inc. and Pine Belt PCS, Inc., CC Docket No. 96-45, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 17 FCC Rcd 9589, 9593 ¶ 10 (2002); Western Wireless Corp., Petition for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier in the State of Wyoming, CC Docket No. 96-45, Memorandum Opinion and Order, 16 FCC Rcd 48, 52 ¶ 10 (2000).

regulations governing the deployment and availability of E911 compatible handsets.

4. Toll Limitation for Qualified Low-Income Customers

Toll limitation allows customers to block the completion of outgoing long distance calls to prevent them from incurring significant long distance charges and risking disconnection. As described above, Q LINK provides its wireless service on a prepaid, or pay-as-you-go, basis. Q LINK's service, moreover, is not offered on a distance-sensitive basis and minutes are not charged separately for local or domestic long distance services. Customers also must specifically authorize access for international services, for which additional charges may apply. As the FCC found in its grant of ETC designation to Virgin Mobile, "the prepaid nature of [a prepaid wireless service provider's] service offering works as an effective toll control."²² The nature of Q LINK's service, therefore, mitigates any concerns that low-income customers will incur significant charges for long distance calls resulting in disconnection of their service.

5. Other Services

While no longer required, Q LINK provides dual tone multi-frequency ("DTMF") signaling to expedite the transmission of call set up and call detail information throughout the network, single party service to its customers for the duration of each telephone call and not multi-party (or "party-line") services, access to operator services, the ability to make interexchange, or long distance, telephone calls, and the ability to reach directory assistance services from customers' provided wireless handsets.

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²² See Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service; In the Matter of Virgin Mobile USA, L.P. Petition for Forbearance from 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(1)(A); Petitions for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier in the States of New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Virginia, Order, FCC 09-18 (rel. March 5, 2009)("Virgin Mobile Order"), 24 FCC Rcd at 3394 ¶ 34.

D. Q LINK Will Advertise the Availability of Supported Services

Q LINK will broadly advertise the availability and rates for the services described above using media of general distribution as required by Section 54.201(d)(2) of the FCC's regulations.²³ The Company will advertise its services in a manner reasonably designed to reach those likely to qualify for Lifeline and Link-up services, using many mediums for outreach including internet, radio, television and local kiosks. The Company will engage in advertising campaigns specifically targeted to reach those likely to qualify for Lifeline and Link-Up services, promoting the availability of cost-effective wireless services to this neglected consumer segment. Q LINK will also promote the availability of its Lifeline and Link-up offerings by distributing brochures at various state and local social service agencies, and intends to partner with nonprofit assistance organizations in order to inform customers of the availability of its Lifeline and Link-Up services.

In addition, Q LINK will utilize its network of retail partners to help promote the availability of its Lifeline and Link-Up plans, especially those retail outlets that are frequented by low income consumers. Q LINK will provide retail vendors with signage to be displayed where Company products are sold, and with printed materials describing the Company's Lifeline and Link-Up programs.²⁴ Given the relationship that exists between Q LINK, low income consumers, and retail outlets that are often visited by low income consumers, the Company expects to be able to inform consumers of the availability of Lifeline and Link-Up service in a manner that will result in significantly higher participation by qualified consumers than has been the case in the past.

²³ See 47 C.F.R. § 54.201.

²⁴ See attached Exhibit 4 for sample advertisements.

Statistics suggest that there are many eligible customers who are not yet aware of the programs. According to the best data available to Applicant, as of December 31, 2010, fewer than 20% of consumers eligible for Lifeline and Linkup Services in the State of Utah were being provided such services.²⁵ Q LINK believes that its advertising and outreach efforts detailed above will result in increased participation in the Lifeline and Link-Up programs.

E. Q LINK Requests Designation Throughout Its Service Area in Utah

Q LINK is not a rural telephone company as defined in Section 153(37) of the Act (47 U.S.C. § 153(37)). Accordingly, the Company is required to describe the geographic area(s) within which it requests designation as an ETC. Q LINK requests designation as an ETC that is statewide in scope, subject to the existence of its underlying carrier's facilities and corresponding coverage. Q LINK understands that its service area may overlap with rural carriers in Utah, but maintains that the public interest factors described below justify its designation in these carriers' service areas, especially because it seeks ETC designation solely to utilize USF funding to provide Lifeline and Link-Up service to qualified low-income consumers. It does not seek and will not accept high cost support.

F. Service Commitment Throughout the Proposed Designated Service Area

Q LINK provides service in Utah through a combination of its own facilities and by reselling service which it obtains from its underlying facilities-based provider. The provider's network is operational and largely built out. Thus, Q LINK will be able to commence offering its Lifeline and Link-Up service to all locations served by its underlying carrier very soon after

²⁵ See attached Exhibit 5, 2010 Lifeline Participation Rates by State, which was obtained from the Universal Service Administrative Company ("USAC"), an independent not-for-profit corporation designated as the administrator of the federal Universal Service Fund by the FCC. USAC administers Universal Service Fund (USF) programs for high cost companies serving rural areas, low-income consumers, rural health care providers, and schools and libraries. Also attached is an FCC News Release dated September 14, 2009.

²⁶ A list of wire centers in which the Company requests ETC designation is attached hereto as Exhibit 6.

receiving approval from the Commission. Therefore, the Company will be able to provide Lifeline and Link-Up service to all qualified customers on a timely basis or within a reasonable period of time in accordance with 47 C.F.R. § 54.202(a)(1). Q LINK further commits to provide service throughout its proposed ETC-designated service area to all customers making a reasonable request for service, as required in 47 C.F.R. § 54.202(a)(1)(i).

G. Five-Year Network Improvement Plan

Under FCC guidelines, an ETC applicant must submit a five-year plan that describes with specificity proposed improvements or upgrades to the applicant's network on a wire center-by-wire center basis throughout its proposed designated service area. This guideline has no application where an applicant's requested ETC serving territory would qualify it to receive no "high cost" USF support, but only "low income" USF support. Because Q LINK seeks ETC designation solely for purposes of reimbursement for provision of subsidized Lifeline and Link-Up services to eligible customers, submission of a Five-Year Network Improvement Plan is not required. Since Lifeline support is designed to reduce the monthly cost of telecommunications services for eligible consumers, is distributed on a per-household basis and is directly reflected in the price that the eligible customer pays, it is assured that all support received by the carrier is used to provide Lifeline services to consumers, thus promoting Lifeline and the availability of telephone service to low income users, which is clearly in the public interest.

H. Ability to Remain Functional in Emergency Situations

In accordance with 47 CFR §54.202(a)(2), Q LINK has the ability to remain functional in emergency situations. Through its agreement with its underlying carrier, Q LINK provides to its customers the same ability to remain functional in emergency situations as currently provided by the ILECs to their own customers, including access to a reasonable amount of back-up power rerouting of traffic around damaged facilities, and the capability of managing traffic spikes

resulting from emergency situations. Q LINK does not own or operate any cell sites or microwave hubs, and facilities owned by the Company are collocated on a Tier 1 carrier's switching center, which is capable of remaining fully functional with both generator and battery back-up.

I. Commitment to Consumer Protection and Service Quality

Under FCC guidelines, an ETC applicant must demonstrate that it will satisfy applicable consumer protection and service quality standards.²⁷ The Company commits to satisfying all such applicable state and federal requirements related to consumer protection and service quality standards. Specifically, Q LINK commits to comply with the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association's (CTIA) Consumer Code for Wireless Service.

J. Local Usage Requirement

An applicant for ETC designation must demonstrate that it offers a local usage plan that is "comparable" to the plan offered by the ILEC in the relevant service territory. In analyzing whether an ETC applicant's plan is comparable to the underlying ILEC's, the FCC reviews all aspects of the plan on a case-by-case basis, including the nature of the supported service, the size of the local calling area, the inclusion of additional services (e.g., caller I.D., etc.) and the amount of local usage. ²⁹

Not only will the Company's offering be comparable to the underlying ILEC plans, but it also will exceed them in several respects. Q LINK will offer customers a certain amount of service free of charge. In contrast to the ILEC plans, which contain relatively small local calling areas, Q LINK customers can use these free minutes to place calls statewide, nationwide, or even

²⁷ See 47 C.F.R. § 54.202(a)(3).

²⁸ 47 C.F.R. § 54.202(a)(4).

²⁹ See Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, Report and Order, 20 FCC Rcd 6371, 6385 (2005).

internationally,³⁰ because Q LINK does not constrict customers' use by imposing a local calling area requirement. Q LINK will also provide Lifeline customers with E911 capabilities and access to voice mail, caller I.D., and call waiting services at no cost. The very nature of the wireless phone, i.e. mobility, has a tremendous benefit to many consumers, a benefit to which a monetary value cannot be easily assigned.

K. Equal Access Requirement

The FCC's Rules also require an applicant for ETC status to provide a certification that it acknowledges that the FCC may require it to provide equal access to long distance carriers in the event that no other ETC is providing equal access within the service area (47 C.F.R § 54.202(a)). Q LINK acknowledges that it may be required to provide equal access to long distance carriers within its designated service area, and will abide by such a requirement

L. Q LINK Will Comply with Certification and Verification Requirements

Section 54.416 of the FCC's Rules requires ETCs to certify a consumer's qualification for Link-Up, and Section 54.410 of the FCC's Rules requires ETCs to certify and verify a Lifeline customer's initial and continued eligibility. Q LINK will certify and verify consumer eligibility in accordance with the FCC's requirements and with applicable Commission rules, and will comply with the outcome of Commission Docket No. 10-2528-01.

M. Q LINK Will Comply With All Regulations Imposed By The Commission

By this Petition, Q LINK hereby asserts its willingness and ability to comply with all the rules and regulations that the Commission may lawfully impose upon the Company's provision of service contemplated by this Petition. Q LINK commits to pay into funds that receive monies from telecommunications surcharges, such as the Utah USF, 911 Emergency Services Fund, and

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³⁰ International calling included in Plan 1; charges apply for adding international calling on other plans.

Poison Control Fund. Upon Commission request, the Company is prepared to answer questions or present additional testimony or other evidence about its services within the state.

V. DESIGNATION OF Q LINK AS AN ETC WOULD PROMOTE THE PUBLIC INTEREST

One of the principal goals of the Act, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, is "to secure lower prices and higher quality services for American telecommunications consumers and encourage the rapid deployment of new telecommunications technologies" to all citizens, regardless of geographic location or income.³¹ There is no question that designation of Q LINK as an ETC in Utah will further the public interest by providing Utah consumers, especially low-income consumers, with lower prices and higher quality services. Many low-income customers in Utah have yet to reap the full benefits of the intensely competitive wireless market. Whether because of financial constraints, poor credit history or intermittent employment, these consumers often lack the countless choices available to most consumers.

The instant request for ETC designation must be examined in light of the Act's goal of providing low-income consumers with access to telecommunications services. The primary purpose of universal service is to ensure that consumers—particularly low-income consumers—receive affordable and comparable telecommunications services. Given this context, designating Q LINK as an ETC would significantly benefit low-income consumers eligible for Lifeline and Link-Up services in the State of Utah—the intended beneficiaries of universal service.

The public interest benefits of the Company's wireless service include larger local calling areas (as compared to traditional wireline carriers), the convenience and security afforded by mobile telephone service, the opportunity for customers to control cost by receiving a preset amount of monthly airtime at no charge, the ability to purchase additional usage at flexible and

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³¹ Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56.

affordable amounts in the event that included usage has been exhausted, 911 service and, where available, E911 service in accordance with current FCC requirements. The Company's Lifeline customers will receive the same high-quality wireless services and exceptional customer service provided to all Company customers. Q LINK's Lifeline rate plans will not only allow feature-rich mobile connectivity for qualifying subscribers at no cost to the subscriber, but also will bring a variety of rate plans into the reach of Lifeline customers that are comparable in minutes and features to those available to post-paid wireless subscribers – but at low Lifeline rates and without the burden of credit checks or contracts.

Q LINK's Lifeline and Link-Up programs will provide low-income Utah residents with the convenience and security offered by wireless services—even if their financial position deteriorates. The economic circumstances indicate that low-income individuals, now more than ever, can greatly benefit from the advantages offered by the Company's Lifeline and Link-Up service, thus allowing those adversely impacted by the failing economy or job loss to have access to a free wireless service to assist in emergency situations, facilitate job search efforts, and to maintain contact with family members.

It is also a commonly accepted fact that in today's market all consumers, including qualified Lifeline and Link-Up customers, view the portability and convenience of wireless service not as a luxury, but as a necessity. Mobile service allows children to reach their parents, wherever they may be, allows a person seeking employment the ability to be contacted by potential employers, and provides end users with the ability to contact emergency service providers, regardless of location. Providing Q LINK with the authority necessary to offer discounted Lifeline and Link-up services to those most in danger of losing wireless service altogether undoubtedly promotes the public interest.

Moreover, grant of Q LINK's Petition will serve the public interest in increasing the number of ETCs in Utah. By granting ETC status to Q LINK, the Commission will enable the Company to increase the number of Utah residents receiving Lifeline and Link-Up support, thereby increasing the amount of USF money flowing into Utah. In sum, ETC designation in the State of Utah would enable Q LINK to provide all of the public benefits cited by the FCC in its analysis in the *Virgin Mobile Order*. Namely, Q LINK would provide "increased consumer choice, high-quality service offerings, and mobility," as well as the safety and security of effective 911 and E911 services. 33

A. The Benefits of Competitive Choice

The benefits to consumers of being able to choose from among a variety of telecommunications service providers have been acknowledged by the FCC for more than three decades.³⁴ Designation of Q LINK as an ETC will promote competition and innovation, and spur other carriers to target low-income consumers with service offerings tailored to their needs and to improve their existing networks to remain competitive, resulting in improved services to consumers. Designation of Q LINK as an ETC will help assure that quality services are available at "just, reasonable, and affordable rates" as envisioned in the Act.³⁵ Introducing Q LINK into the market as an additional wireless ETC provider will afford low income Utah residents a wider choice of providers and available services while creating a competitive marketplace as ETCs compete for a finite number of Lifeline-eligible customers. Increasing the competitive marketplace of providers has the potential to effectively increase the penetration rate and reduce the number of individuals not connected to the PSTN.

³² See Virgin Mobile Order, 24 FCC Rcd at 3395 ¶ 38.

³³ *See Id.* at 3391 ¶ 23.

³⁴ See, e.g., Specialized Common Carrier Services, 29 FCC Rcd 870 (1971).

³⁵ See 47 U.S.C. § 254(b)(1).

B. Impact on the Universal Service Fund

Q LINK's request for designation as an ETC solely for purposes of participating in the low-income programs of the USF would not unduly burden the USF or otherwise reduce the amount of funding available to other ETCs. According to the Joint-Board's most recent monitoring report, Lifeline funding totaled approximately \$974 million in 2009 while high-cost program expenditures amounted to approximately \$4.3 billion—more than four times the amount of Lifeline funding.³⁶ With Lifeline and Link-Up, ETCs only receive support for customers they obtain. The amount of support available to an eligible subscriber is exactly the same whether the support is given through a company such as Q LINK or the Incumbent LEC operating in the same service area. Q LINK will only increase the amount of USF Lifeline funding in situations where it obtains Lifeline customers not enrolled in another ETC's Lifeline program. Significantly, the Company's designation as an ETC will not increase the number of persons eligible for Lifeline support. Q LINK's ability to increase the Lifeline participation rate of qualified low-income individuals will further the goal of Congress to provide all individuals with affordable access to telecommunications service, and thus any incremental increases in Lifeline and Link-Up expenditures are far outweighed by the significant public interest benefits of expanding the availability of affordable wireless services to low-income consumers.

VI. ANTI-DRUG ABUSE CERTIFICATION

Q LINK certifies that no party to this Petition is subject to denial of federal benefits, including FCC benefits, pursuant to Section 5301 of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988.

³⁶ See Universal Service Monitoring Report, CC Docket 98-202, Tables 2.2 and 3.1 (2010).

VII. CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, designation of Q LINK as an ETC in the State of Utah accords with the requirements of Section 214(e)(2) of the Act and is in the public interest.

WHEREFORE, Q LINK respectfully requests that the Commission promptly designate Q LINK as an ETC in the State of Utah.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

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Attorney for Q LINK WIRELESS LLC

November 8, 2017

Certification of Issa Asad, Managing Member of QUADRANT HOLDINGS GROUP LLC, Managing Member of Q LINK WIRELESS LLC

Proposed Lifeline and Link-Up Offering

Lifeline Service Rates

Plan 1: 68 Monthly Minutes Plan*

68 anytime minutes per month

(texts are one-third of one minute, i.e. 3 texts = 1 minute)

Net cost to Lifeline customer: \$0 (free)

*This package includes:

- Free handset
- Free calls to Customer Service
- Free calls to 911 emergency services
- Free Voicemail, Caller-ID, and Call Waiting
- 68 anytime minutes (unused minutes rollover)
- Free Domestic Long Distance
- Free International Long Distance to countries designated at www.qlinkwireless.com (listed below)

Plan 2: 125 Monthly Minutes Plan*

125 anytime minutes per month

(texts are one minute, i.e. 1 text = 1 minute)

Net cost to Lifeline customer: **\$0** (free)

*This package includes:

- Free handset
- Free calls to Customer Service
- Free calls to 911 emergency services
- Free Voicemail, Caller-ID, and Call Waiting
- 125 anytime minutes (unused minutes rollover)
- Free Domestic Long Distance

Plan 3: 250 Monthly Minutes Plan*

250 anytime minutes per month

(texts are one minute, i.e. 1 text = 1 minute)

Net cost to Lifeline customer: **\$0** (free)

*This package includes:

- Free handset
- Free calls to Customer Service
- Free calls to 911 emergency services
- Free Voicemail, Caller-ID, and Call Waiting
- 250 anytime minutes (unused minutes do not rollover)
- Free Domestic Long Distance

International Long Distance

Free International Calling Destinations on the 68 Monthly Minutes Plan

(Certain special or off-network locations may be excluded from the Free International Long Distance. Calls to cellular phones are not included unless the word "Cellular" is specifically listed next to the country name. Numbers in parentheses () indicate the Country Code.)

Albania-Tirana (355) Andorra (376) Argentina (54) Australia (61) Austria (43) Bahamas-Cellular (1)

Bahamas (1) Bangladesh-Cellular (880) Bangladesh-Chittagong

(880)

Bangladesh-Dhaka (880) Bangladesh-Sylhet (880)

Belgium (32)

Bermuda-Cellular (1)

Bermuda (1)

Bolivia-La Paz (591) Bolivia-Santa Cruz (591)

Brazil (55)

Brunei-Cellular (673)

Brunei (673) Bulgaria (359) Canada-Cellular (1)

Canada (1) Chile (56)

China-Cellular (86)

China (86)

Columbia-Cellular (57)

Columbia (57) Costa Rica (506) Croatia (585)

Cyprus-Cellular (357)

Cyprus (357)

Czech Republic (420)

Denmark (45)

Dominican Republic (1)

Estonia (372) Finland (358) France (33)

French Antilles (594)

French Guiana-Cellular

(594)

French Guiana (594)

Georgia (995) Germany (49) Gibraltar (350) Greece (30) Guadeloupe (590)

Guatemala-Telgua (502) Hong Kong-Cellular (852)

Hong Kong (852) Hungary (36) Iceland (354) India-Cellular (91)

India (91)

Indonesia-Cellular (62) Indonesia-Jakarta (62) Indonesia-Surabaya (62) Iraq-Baghdad (964)

Ireland (353)
Israel (972)
Italy (39)
Japan (81)
Jordan (962)
Kazakhstan (7)
Kenya-Nairobi (254)
Lithuania (370)

(352)

Luxembourg (352) Macao-Cellular (853)

Luxembourg-Cellular

Macao (853)

Malaysia-Cellular (60)

Malaysia (60) Malta (356) Mexico (52) Monaco (377) Netherlands (31) New Zealand (64) Norway (47)

Panama (507) Paraguay (595)

Peru (51) Poland (48) Portugal (351) Romania (40)

Russia-Cellular (7)

Russia (7) San Marino-Cellular (378)

San Marino (378)

Saudi Arabia-Riyadh (966) Singapore-Cellular (65)

Singapore (65) Slovakia (421) Slovenia (386)

South Korea-Cellular (82)

South Korea (82) Spain (34) Sweden (46) Switzerland (41)

Taiwan (866) Thailand (66) Turkey (90)

United Kingdom (44) Uzbekistan (7)

Taiwan-Cellular (886)

Venezuela (58)

Vietnam-Ho Chi Minh

City (84) Zambia (260)

Link-Up Service Rates

Standard Activation Rate: \$60.00

Link-Up Discount: \$30.00

Net cost to Link-Up Customer: \$30.00*

*Qualifying subscribers may request a deferred payment schedule for the remaining installation charges, thus allowing subscribers to obtain service without being required to pay any fees to activate service with Q LINK.

Confidential Facilities Schematic

CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY

Sample Advertisements

2010 Lifeline Participation Rates by State and FCC News Release

Federal Communications Commission 445 12th Street, S.W. Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500 Internet: http://www.fcc.gov TTY: 1-888-835-5322

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 14, 2009

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT: Rosemary Kimball (202) 418-0511 Email: rosemary.kimball@fcc.gov

FCC SUPPORTS "NATIONAL LIFELINE AND LINK UP TELEPHONE DISCOUNT AWARENESS WEEK" - SEPTEMBER 14 – 20, 2009

WASHINGTON, DC -- Today, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) joined the effort to call attention to the "National Lifeline and Link Up Telephone Discount Awareness Week," which takes place September 14 – 20, 2009. Various state and local agencies throughout the country will be participating with outreach activities and events. The "Lifeline" and "Link Up" programs provide financial assistance to low-income consumers in connecting a residential phone line and paying their monthly bill. The programs have been active for years and are administered by the FCC and state public utility commissions, but at least half of eligible consumers nationwide do not take advantage of this assistance.

"Lifeline" involves discounts on monthly charges for a primary residential telephone line, including wireless service. "Link Up" involves a discount on the cost of initiating the primary telephone service for a residence, including the activation of a wireless phone that serves as the primary residential telephone. The discounts are available throughout the country, including an enhanced discount on Tribal lands. In general, consumers at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, or who participate in one or more of a number of other assistance programs, are eligible for Lifeline and Link Up.

To help call attention to the availability of these programs, the FCC joins the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA), and urges government agencies and non-profit organizations to help disseminate information on Lifeline and Link Up to their constituents. More information about the programs and how to apply is available at www.lifeline.gov or http://www.usac.org/li/low-income/apply-for-support.aspx.

Wire Centers

WIRE CENTERS	ILEC
HEBER	ALL WEST - UT, INC.
COALVILLE	ALL WEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC UTAH
RANDOLPH	ALL WEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC UTAH
GARDEN CITY	BEAR LAKE COMMUNICATIONS
CEDAR CITY	BEEHIVE TEL CO - UT
IBAPAH	BEEHIVE TEL CO - UT
KOLOB	BEEHIVE TEL CO - UT
	BEEHIVE TEL CO - UT
	CARBON/EMERY TELECOM, INC UT
	CARBON/EMERY TELECOM, INC UT
	CARBON/EMERY TELECOM, INC UT
	CENTRAL TELCOM SVCS DBA CENTRACOM INTERA
	CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE, INC.
	CITIZENS TELECOM-UTAH DBA FRONTIER COMM
	CITIZENS TELECOM-UTAH DBA FRONTIER COMM CITIZENS TELECOM-UTAH DBA FRONTIER COMM
	DIRECT COMMUNICATION CEDAR VALLEY, LLC
	EMERY TELEPHONE DBA EMERY TELECOM GUNNISON TELEPHONE CO.
	PAC - WEST TELECOMM, INC UT
	OWEST CORPORATION
	OWEST CORPORATION
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	QWEST CORPORATION
	HEBER COALVILLE RANDOLPH GARDEN CITY CEDAR CITY IBAPAH

CLLI	WIRE CENTERS	ILEC
FRTNUTMA	FARMINGTON	QWEST CORPORATION
GTVLUTMA	GRANTSVILLE	QWEST CORPORATION
HBCYUTMA	HEBER	OWEST CORPORATION
HLDYUTMA	HOLLADAY	QWEST CORPORATION
HYRMUTMA	HYRUM	QWEST CORPORATION
KYVLUTMA	KAYSVILLE	QWEST CORPORATION
KRNSUTMA	KEARNS	QWEST CORPORATION
LEHIUTMA	LEHI	QWEST CORPORATION
LOGNUTMA	LOGAN	QWEST CORPORATION
MAGNUTNM	MAGNA	QWEST CORPORATION
DRPRUTMA	MIDVALE	QWEST CORPORATION
MDVAUTMA	MIDVALE	QWEST CORPORATION
WJRDUTMA	MIDVALE	QWEST CORPORATION
MONRUTMA	MONROE	QWEST CORPORATION
MTGNUTMA	MORGAN	QWEST CORPORATION
MRGNUTMA	MOUNTAIN GREEN	QWEST CORPORATION
MRRYUTMA	MURRAY	QWEST CORPORATION
NEPHUTMA	NEPHI	QWEST CORPORATION
HNVIUTMA	OGDEN MAIN	QWEST CORPORATION
OGDNUTSO	OGDEN MAIN	QWEST CORPORATION
OGDNUTMA	OGDEN NORTH	QWEST CORPORATION
OGDNUTNO	OGDEN NORTH	QWEST CORPORATION
OGDNUTWE	OGDEN SOUTH	QWEST CORPORATION
OREMUTMA	OREM	QWEST CORPORATION
PRCYUTMA	PARK CITY	QWEST CORPORATION
PRWNUTMA	PAROWAN	QWEST CORPORATION
PYSNUTMA	PAYSON	QWEST CORPORATION
PLGVUTMA	PLEASANT GROVE	QWEST CORPORATION
PROVUTMA	PROVO	QWEST CORPORATION
RCFDUTMA	RICHFIELD	QWEST CORPORATION
RCMDUTMA	RICHMOND	QWEST CORPORATION
RVTNUTMA	RIVERTON	QWEST CORPORATION
SALNUTMA	SALINA	QWEST CORPORATION
SLKCUTEA	SALT LAKE EAST	QWEST CORPORATION
SLKCUTWE	SALT LAKE MAIN	QWEST CORPORATION
SLKCUTSO	SALT LAKE SOUTH	QWEST CORPORATION
SNTQUTMA	SANTAQUIN	QWEST CORPORATION
SMFDUTMA	SMITHFIELD	QWEST CORPORATION
SALMUTMA	SPANISH FORK	QWEST CORPORATION
SPFKUTMA	SPANISH FORK	QWEST CORPORATION
SPVLUTMA	SPRINGVILLE	QWEST CORPORATION
HRCNUTMA	ST GEORGE	QWEST CORPORATION
LEDSUTMA	ST GEORGE	QWEST CORPORATION
SPDLUTMA	ST GEORGE	QWEST CORPORATION
STGRUTMA	ST GEORGE	QWEST CORPORATION
VEYOUTMA	ST GEORGE	QWEST CORPORATION

CLLI	WIRE CENTERS	ILEC
TOOLUTMA	TOOELE	QWEST CORPORATION
DGWYUTMA	DUGWAY	SKYLINE TELECOM
EURKUTXC	EUREKA	SKYLINE TELECOM
GSHNUTXC	GOSHEN	SKYLINE TELECOM
ANTMUTXC	ANTIMONY	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
APVYUTXC	APPLE VLLY	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
BRYLUTAA	BERYL	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
BRCNUTXC	BRYCE CANYON	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
CAVLUTXC	CANNONVL	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
ENTRUTXC	ENTERPRISE	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
ESCLUTXC	ESCALANTE	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
HATCUTXC	НАТСН	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
KSHRUTAA	KOOSHAREM	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
MRVAUTXC	MARYSVALE	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
MLFRUTXC	MILFORD	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
MNVIUTXC	MINERSVILLE	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
PNGTUTXC	PANGUITCH	SOUTH CENTRAL UTAH TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION
ALMTUTXC	ALTAMONT	UBTA-UBET COMMUNICATINS, INC.
DCHSUTMA	DUCHESNE	UBTA-UBET COMMUNICATINS, INC.
FTBTUTXC	FLATTOP BUTTE	UBTA-UBET COMMUNICATINS, INC.
FRLDUTXC	FRUITLAND	UBTA-UBET COMMUNICATINS, INC.
LAPNUTXC	LA POINT	UBTA-UBET COMMUNICATINS, INC.
NEOLUTXC	NEOLA	UBTA-UBET COMMUNICATINS, INC.
RNDTUTXC	RANDLETT	UBTA-UBET COMMUNICATINS, INC.
RSVTUTMA	ROOSEVELT	UBTA-UBET COMMUNICATINS, INC.
TABNUTXC	TABIONA	UBTA-UBET COMMUNICATINS, INC.
DTJHUTXC	DUTCH JOHN	UNION TELEPHONE CO WY
GNDLUTXC	GREENDALE	UNION TELEPHONE CO WY
MANLUTXC	MANILA	UNION TELEPHONE CO WY

Direct Testimony of Issa Asad, Managing Member of QUADRANT HOLDINGS GROUP LLC, Managing Member of Q LINK WIRELESS LLC