

March 28, 2017

Utah Public Service Commission
Heber M. Wells Building
160 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

RE: Docket No. 17-052-01

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to give the commission another perspective on the above referenced issue. Richard and Colleen Flinspach are my parents and currently are without land-line based phone service. This is a major concern to me as both my parents are in their 70s and there is no cell service available at the ranch house location. They can drive to places within the canyon where cell service is available, but my concern is more if something happens that prevents them from getting in a car to drive to such a location.

My father, with assistance from our family friends, installed the phone line from Modena to the pole next to their ranch house. South Central then completed the line from the pole to the ranch house. My parents live at the end of the line going up towards Hamblin Valley, Utah. For 30 plus years, before cell phones became more reliable and powerful, they were the closest phone to use in case of an emergency that occurred in Hamblin Valley. Growing up at the ranch, I personally was involved and assisted in repairing the phone line when someone had torn it down with a truck or object too large to go under it where it crossed the country road or in winter when it contracted and broke in a weak area. These repairs were done by my father because of the feeling of self-reliance and also because of his ability to do it now and not wait for others to assist.

Issue now is that as he is approaching 80 years old, he is not physically capable of maintaining the line and so must rely on the phone company personnel. This is the same phone company that let him into the Association as a full member. The same company, which for 40 years, has been charging him the same rate as others, even though he was handling repairs for which he was given no credit for performing. They had no problem taking my parents money for all these years at the FULL price.

In regards to the response from South Central telephone and my father's visit to them being frustrated and "verbally abusive". I suggest that those who felt "threatened" by a 77 year-old man spend more time working or at the gym and less time on the couch. Also, if they were offended by his language, they learn to realize we live in a free country where freedom of speech is a right, regardless of how limited their vocabulary is by their choice.

The normal time required to repair on the line, that is approximately a five mile stretch, is minimal. The line only requires attention when someone drives through it on the four places that it goes across the county road or during extreme winter conditions. My father's frustration comes from requesting help from a telephone company that considers him insignificant and plainly states that providing him service or assisting him was done as a "courtesy", even though he pays them every month the same as every other telephone customer. To fall back on the fact that they made him use his own resources to put up and maintain the line for forty years, while making him a full member of the association and billing him monthly as everyone else, as a way to deny any responsibility to assist in maintaining the line now that he is physically unable to continue to do so, in my opinion, is reprehensible.

Instead of assisting my elderly parents, they would rather pay a lawyer to find cause to not help them! Technically, they are correct in that the Flinspachs do own the line between the pole at Modena and the Flinspach ranch, but they also help maintain the line between the ranch pole and the ranch house. The simple relief that my parents were asking for assistance is maintaining the line, which the cost would be far less than the attorney is charging to defend South Central currently!

I will allow my parents to formally respond to the lawyer's letter concerning the matter. However, I could not stand by and simply allow this matter to occur without letting all those involved know that some things are about what is right and wrong rather than what can be legally defended. I notice that the South Central lawyer did not mention that my parents were accepted as full member of the Association without any exceptions listed. Would be a good legal question to ask as to whether South Central behavior in accepting and charging them for forty plus years would constitute acceptance of the CPE as part of the system to be maintained.

I appreciate the time spent by the Utah Public Service Commission personnel and officials that not only are assisting my parents, but took the time to read this letter. I believe that Commissions such as yours are available to the public to protect individuals, like my parents, that try to get along rather than litigate. The telephone company is a public utility and every member of the public that pays for the service should be treated fairly. A two hour repair once every other year seems to not be asking too much of a utility that bills monthly and hasn't had to assist in maintaining the line for 40 years!

Respectfully submitted for the record,

Michael Flinspach