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Action Request Response

To: Public Service Commission of Utah

From: Utah Division of Public Utilities

Chris Parker, Director

Artie Powell, Manager

Brenda Salter, Utility Technical Consultant Supervisor

Paul Hicken, Utility Technical Consultant

Date: November 18, 2021

Re: **Docket No. 21-052-T02**, South Central Utah Telephone Association, Inc. Tariff
Revisions to change the Federal Lifeline Support benefit.

Recommendation (Approve Tariff Sheets)

The Division of Public Utilities (DPU or Division) has reviewed the tariff filing and recommends the Public Service Commission (Commission) approve South Central Utah Telephone Association, Inc. (SCUTA) request to modify its Tariff for Federal Lifeline standalone voice.

Issue

On November 17, 2021, SCUTA submitted Advice Letter T-21-052-T02 including revised tariff sheets with the purpose to conform to Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Order DA 21-1389. SCUTA requests an effective date of December 1, 2021.

Background

On November 5, 2021, the FCC issued Order DA 21-1389 pausing the elimination of the federal lifeline benefit for standalone voice service for one year. The Commission issued an Action Request on November 17, 2021, for the Division to investigate the proposed changes and report

its findings and recommendation to the Commission by November 26, 2021. This memorandum represents the Division's response to the Commission's Action Request.

Discussion

In 2016, the FCC scheduled a phase-down of Lifeline support for voice-only services.¹ The phase-down was implemented to promote the adoption of broadband and to modernize the Lifeline program. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Order DA 21-1389 provides a brief relief to low-income customers by pausing the elimination of the federal Lifeline benefit for standalone voice service. Lifeline customers subscribed to only voice service or voice with non-qualifying broadband service will continue to receive the federal Lifeline benefit for one year.

Conclusion

The Division has reviewed SCUTA's filing and has no objections to the proposed revisions. Therefore, the Division recommends the Commission approve this filing as submitted on or before December 1, 2021, as requested.

Cc: Stephen Jantz, South Central Utah Telephone Association
Tym Rutkowski, Senior Manager for Moss Adams LLP
Michele Beck, Director, Office of Consumer Services

¹ 2016 Lifeline Order, FCC 16-38