

KIRA M. SLAWSON (7081)
BLACKBURN & STOLL, LC
Attorneys for Utah Rural Telecom Association
257 East 200 South, Suite 800
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
Telephone: (801) 521-7900
kslawson@blackburn-stoll.com

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF UTAH

In the Matter of: QWEST CORPORATION d/b/a CENTURYLINK QC Petition for Statewide Exemption from R746-350-1(b) Carrier of Last Resort Obligation	UTAH RURAL TELECOM ASSOCIATION’S OBJECTION TO INFORMAL ADJUDICATION Docket 22-049-62
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The Utah Rural Telecom Association (“URTA”) on behalf of its members All West Communications, Inc., Bear Lake Communications, Inc., Beehive Telephone Company, Carbon/Emery Telecom, Inc., Central Utah Telephone, Inc., Direct Communications Cedar Valley, LLC, E Fiber Moab, LLC, E Fiber San Juan, LLC, Emery Telephone, Gunnison Telephone Company, Hanksville Telcom, Inc. Manti Telephone Company, Skyline Telecom, South Central Utah Telephone Association, Inc., UBTA-UBET Communications Inc. (dba Strata Networks), and Union Telephone Company, hereby objects to the informal adjudication of the Petition for Statewide Exemption from R746-350-1(b) by QWEST CORPORATION d/b/a CENTURYLINK QC (“CenturyLink’s Petition”). For the reasons briefly set forth below, URTA requests that CenturyLinks’s Petition be formally adjudicated.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

On December 5, 2022, QWEST CORPORATION d/b/a CENTURYLINK QC (“CenturyLink”) filed a Petition for Statewide Exemption from the R746-350-1(b) Carrier of

Last Resort Obligation. CenturyLink’s Petition also requested informal adjudication under Utah Code §54-8b-3(1)(b). Under §54-8b-3(1)(b) of the Utah Code, the Commission is permitted to proceed under informal adjudication if a party to an application for exemption from a Commission statutory requirement requests informal adjudication and no person opposes the request for informal adjudication before 10 business days after the day on which the party files the request. The Commission issued a Notice of Filing and Request for Comments to be filed on or before January 4, 2023.

II. URTA OBJECTION TO INFORMAL ADJUDICATION.

URTA hereby opposes the request for informal adjudication. CenturyLink’s Petition requests that CenturyLink be exempted from all carrier-of-last-resort (“COLR”) obligations in the State of Utah. While CenturyLink states in its petition that it has no current plans to discontinue service to its Utah customers,¹ relieving CenturyLink of its COLR obligations means, among other things, it will have no duty to repair or maintain its current facilities. So, while CenturyLink may be subject to competition in its wire centers generally, certain of its customers (particularly those located in historically hard to serve and/or high-cost areas/exchanges) may not have a viable competitive option in the event CenturyLink’s existing facilities are damaged or in need of repair. Relieving CenturyLink of its COLR obligations in the absence of another COLR taking over the COLR obligations raises policy issues that warrant a more robust record than that involved in an informal adjudication. URTA believes the CenturyLink Petition should be formally adjudicated to enable the development of a complete record so the Commission can fully consider both the intended consequences, and the unintended

¹ See CenturyLink’s Petition, FN25, page 15.

consequences, of this request.

III. CONCLUSION

The Commission, in its Notice and Request for Comments, permits interested parties to submit comment on or before January 4, 2023, and URTA anticipates filing comments on or before that date, but given the statutory requirement that objections to informal adjudication are required to be raised within 10 business days of filing, URTA is hereby giving notice of its objection to informal adjudication of the issues raised in CenturyLink's Petition, and URTA's intent to intervene and participate in this Docket.

Dated this 13th day of December, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

UTAH RURAL TELECOM ASSOCIATION



Kira M. Slawson
Blackburn & Stoll, LC
Attorneys for Utah Rural Telecom Association

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the 13th day of December, 2022, I served a true and correct copy of URTA's Objection to Informal Adjudication of the Petition of Qwest Corporation d/b/a CenturyLink QC for Statewide Exemption of Carrier of Last Resort Obligations, Docket 22-049-62, via e-mail transmission to following persons at the e-mail addresses listed below:

Division of Public Utilities

Chris Parker

Brenda Salter

chrisparker@utah.gov

bsalter@utah.gov

dpudatarequest@utah.gov

Office of Consumer Services

Michelle Beck

mbeck@utah.gov

Assistant Utah Attorneys Generals

Patricia Schmid

Patrick Grecu

Robert Moore

Pscmid@agutah.gov

pgrecu@agutah.gov

rmoore@agutah.gov

Max Backlund

Max.backlund@lumen.com

William E. Hendricks

Tre.hendricks@centurylink.com

/s/Kira M. Slawson