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BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF UTAH	
In the Matter of  QWEST CORPORATION d/b/a CENTURYLINK QC  Petition for Statewide Exemption from Carrier of Last Resort Obligations	UTAH RURAL TELECOM ASSOCIATION’S PETITION TO INTERVENE  DOCKET NO. 23-049-01

**PETITION TO INTERVENE**

The Utah Rural Telecom Association (“URTA”), on behalf of itself and URTA members All West Communications, Inc., Bear Lake Communications, Inc., Beehive Telephone Company, Carbon/Emery Telcom, 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 (“Members” or “URTA Members”) hereby Petition the Utah Public Service Commission (“Commission”) for intervention in the above referenced docket.

**PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

On June 20, 2023, Qwest Corporation, d/b/a CenturyLink (“CenturyLink”) filed a Petition for Statewide Exemption form Carrier of Last Resort Obligations (“Petition”) with the Utah Public Service Commission (“Commission”). On July 7, 2023, the Commission issued a Scheduling Order that required CenturyLink to file its direct testimony on or before August 1, 2023, and set the intervention deadline on

October 26, 2023. On August 1, 2023, CTL filed the Direct Testimony of David Ziegler in support of its Petition.

### **REQUEST FOR INTERVENTION**

1. URTA is a Utah non-profit corporation. The URTA members are local exchange carriers providing public telecommunications services in Utah pursuant to certificates of public convenience and necessity (“CPCN”) issued by the Commission. URTA members are also ETCs, and pursuant to Utah Code Section 54-8b-15 and Utah Administrative Code R746-8-200, URTA’s members are rate-of-return regulated carriers of last resort who provide access lines and connections in the State of Utah.

2. CenturyLink’s Petition seeks to exempt CenturyLink from all of its carrier of last resort (“COLR”) obligations in all wire centers in Utah.

3. Utah’s COLR obligations currently require that CenturyLink provide public voice telecommunication service to any customer that requests voice service within a given local exchange. See Utah Code § 54-8b-15. CenturyLink seeks relief from the obligation to provide voice service to every customer that requests voice service within all of its local exchanges.

4. This is the first time an incumbent COLR has petitioned the Commission for exemption from COLR obligations in the State of Utah. As a result, there are several factual and policy issues that the Commission should consider before granting CenturyLink’s Petition. First, it is imperative for the Commission to understand what CenturyLink is requesting by its Petition; second, the Commission must determine whether, under existing statutes and rules, CenturyLink is entitled to the relief requested; and finally, whether such relief is in the public interest.

5. As ETCs and COLRs throughout rural Utah, the URTA members are concerned that the granting CenturyLink’s Petition is not in the public interest in the rural local exchanges. Many of the rural local exchanges are not subject to effective competition, and the existing (and new customers) in such rural local exchanges will not have an acceptable substitute service provider if CenturyLink is relieved of its COLR obligations without the Commission approval of another COLR in such exchanges.

6. Additionally, as this is the first instance of a COLR seeking exemption from its COLR obligations, the findings of the Commission may have an impact on the Utah Universal Service Fund, and will have relevance to the other COLRs in the State. URТА and its Members would like to participate in this proceeding to assist in the identification of the public interest factors that should be considered prior to granting exemption from COLR obligations.

7. As a result, pursuant to Utah Admin. Rule R746-1-108, and in compliance with Utah Code Section 63G-4-207, URТА seeks to intervene in this proceeding for the purpose of protecting its members' interests, as they may appear, as COLRs in the State of Utah.

8. The interests of justice and the orderly and prompt consideration of this proceeding will not be materially impaired by allowing URТА to intervene.

9. URТА requests that copies of all notices, pleadings, filings, correspondence and discovery requests and responses in this docket be served on:

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NOW THEREFORE, URТА respectfully requests that the Commission enter an Order granting URТА's Petition to Intervene in this docket, allowing URТА to participate to the fullest extent allowed by law.

DATED this 18<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023.

BLACKBURN & STOLL, LC



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Kira M. Slawson  
Attorneys for Utah Rural Telecom Association

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of URTA's Petition for Intervention, Docket 23-049-01, was served the 18<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023 as follows:

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