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MARGARET W. BUSSE
Executive Director CHRIS PARKER
Division Director

Recommendation

To: Public Service Commission of Utah

From: Utah Division of Public Utilities

Chris Parker, Director
Brenda Salter, Assistant Director
Doug Wheelwright, Utility Technical Consultant Supervisor
Kelley O'Connor, Utility Analyst
Robyn Barber, Utility Analyst

Date: March 16, 2026

Re: **Docket No. 26-049-02** Investigation of Qwest Corporation d/b/a CenturyLink QC's ("CenturyLink") Notice of Planned Discontinuance of Residential Voice Services in Springdale, Utah

Recommendation (Acknowledge with Recommendation)

The Division of Public Utilities (Division) recommends the Public Service Commission (PSC) acknowledge that Qwest Corporation d/b/a CenturyLink QC (CenturyLink or Company) has not violated any applicable Utah statute, administrative rule, or prior administrative order in sending the Discontinuance Letter.

Additionally, the Division recommends the PSC inform the Mayor of Springdale of the public comment period (ends March 24, 2026) in the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) Wire Center docket No. 26-55.¹ The Mayor and others should consider whether and how to participate in that proceeding, which was filed after the letter and the Commission request to the Division.

Issue

On February 26, 2026, the PSC issued a Notice of Investigation to the Division regarding what CenturyLink is attempting to accomplish through the Discontinuance Letter, if

¹ Attachment 1 FCC WC Docket No. 26-55.



CenturyLink is in violation of any applicable statute, administrative rule, or prior administrative order, and make recommendations on appropriate PSC action.

Background

The PSC has learned through the Mayor of Springdale, Utah that CenturyLink intends to discontinue legacy voice service (“POTS”) in the Springdale, Utah wire center on April 20, 2026, or as soon after as it is authorized by regulatory authority. In the Discontinuance letter CenturyLink also provided information about a new wireless voice service option, intended as a replacement for POTS. The letter did not include any information regarding relevant docket numbers or regulatory body filings.

Discussion

On March 2, 2026, representatives from the Division and Lumen Technologies (parent company of CenturyLink) met and discussed the Discontinuance letter, the Company’s intent, and the relevant statutory basis for the discontinuance. Utah Code Ann. §§ 54-8b-2.3(11) and 54-8b-3(8) were amended in S.B. 269 Telecommunications Amendments on February 24, 2025, with an effective date of July 5, 2025. These amendments provide an avenue for CenturyLink to discontinue service through a Federal Communications Commission action that would be automatically adopted by the PSC. Below are the relevant code sections. Utah Admin Code R746-350-1: Application to Discontinue Telecommunications Service, does not apply as Utah Code Ann. § 54-8b-3(8) is the statutorily prescribed means to effectuate a discontinuance of service.

Utah Code Ann. § 54-8b-2.3 (11): An incumbent telephone corporation that is regulated under price regulation under this section rather than traditional rate of return regulation...(b) shall...(ii) continue to provide and maintain the basic residential service to existing locations described in Subsection (11)(b)(i) until the commission recognizes and adopts discontinuance findings under Subsection 54-8b-3(8).

Utah Code Ann. § 54-8b-3(8): If the Federal Communications Commission permits a telecommunications corporation to discontinue service under 47 U.S.C. Sec. 214(a), the commission shall recognize and adopt the Federal Communications Commission's discontinuance findings.

Utah Admin Code R746-350-1B: No telecommunications corporation may discontinue the provision of Basic Telecommunications Service to existing customers in a service area, or portions thereof, without first complying with this rule or receiving an exemption from the Commission.

Under this section, CenturyLink may discontinue service to Utah subscribers if allowed by FCC ruling. Of note, CenturyLink has successfully filed and been approved for similar dockets in other states' service areas. The Lumen Technologies representatives indicated that absent any public comments, it is expected that the request will be automatically granted by the FCC. Lumen mailed the letter giving rise to this investigation in accordance with FCC rules, which require subscriber notification before the FCC filing may be made². Due to this, the initial subscriber discontinuance letter did not contain any reference to the FCC docket.

Finally, the new service described in the Discontinuance Letter "Connected Voice with Air-Line" is a voice-only landline-mimicking service intended as a direct replacement for POTS without any significant change in end-user experience. It replaces physical wire service with wireless service connected to the home phone and requires no additional subscriptions to function. The purchase of a backup battery priced at approximately \$40 would be required to maintain service through a power outage. The details of this service are found in a previous CenturyLink FCC filing for the same type of discontinuance in the state of Florida on June 5, 2025, FCC WC docket no. 25-170³. Subscribers are in the best position to evaluate the level of service and advocate their positions in the FCC proceeding if they oppose it.

Conclusion

The changes made in 2025 to Utah Code Ann. §§ 54-8b-2.3(11) and 54-8b-3(8) make this discontinuance of service legally permissible without any coordination or prior approval from the PSC. The Division does not find that CenturyLink is in violation of any applicable Utah statute or rule.

² 47 C.F.R. § 63.71(c)

³ FCC WC Docket No. 25-170 link: <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/1060518537298/1>

Due to the variation of wireless service coverage in rural areas, the Division recommends that the PSC advise the Mayor of Springdale, Utah to encourage participation in the FCC docket if they expect that sufficient wireless coverage will not be available at their locations.

cc:

Barbara Bruno, Mayor of Springdale
Katie Wagner, Lumen Technologies
Michele Beck, OCS