

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

ORIGINAL

In the Matter of)
Improving Commission Processes) PP Docket No. 96-17

MAR 29 1996

AT&T REPLY COMMENTS

Pursuant to Section 1.430 of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.430, AT&T Corp. ("AT&T") submits this reply to comments of other parties in response to the Commission's NOI herein,¹ soliciting suggestions for additional means of streamlining its processes to better serve the public.²

The comments reflect widespread recognition of the timeliness of the Commission's effort in this docket to explore means of improving the efficiency, and reducing the burden and expense, of its regulatory processes. As AT&T noted in its comments (pp. 1-2), and as other commenters confirm,³ the passage of the Telecommunications Act has heightened the already urgent need for the Commission to critically examine and the effectiveness of its existing regulatory practices, and conform its operational

¹ Improving Commission Processes, PP Docket No. 96-17, Notice of Inquiry, FCC 96-50, released February 14, 1996 ("NOI").

² The parties in addition to AT&T that filed comments are listed in Appendix A.

³ E.g., Bell Atlantic, p. 2; GTE, p. 1; SBC, p. 2.

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procedures to its new regulatory responsibilities and the realities of the competitive telecommunications marketplace.

There is also broad agreement among the commenters that, as AT&T also showed (pp. 4-6), a key ingredient in improving the efficiency and reducing the cost of the Commission's processes is the adoption of modern electronic filing and information retrieval technologies.⁴ Similarly, many commenters share AT&T's observation that the Commission's current processes, in too many instances, require the submission of duplicative and extraneous information, with consequent unnecessary burdens on regulated entities and the Commission itself to compile and store such data.⁵

Regrettably, but predictably, a number of commenters attempt to use this inquiry by the Commission as a vehicle to advance their own narrow regulatory agendas. For example, several local exchange carriers ("LECs") argue that the Commission should eliminate its depreciation prescription process for price cap carriers,⁶ even though the Commission found only last year that allowing such carriers to set their own depreciation rates would allow them improperly to inflate their price caps and, hence, the rates charged to access customers.⁷ In like manner, LEC

⁴ E.g., GTE, p. 18; NECA, p. 2; SBC, p. 5.

⁵ E.g., GTE, pp. 14-17; SBC, pp. 13-20; USTA, pp. 4-6.

⁶ Bell Atlantic, pp. 7-8; GTE, pp. 5-7; USTA, pp. 3-4.

⁷ Simplification of the Depreciation Represcription Process, 10 FCC Rcd 8442 (1995).

commenters argue that the Commission should relax or eliminate tariff filing requirements for those carriers that the Commission has under examination in CC Docket No. 94-1,⁸ where AT&T has demonstrated that continued maintenance of those procedures is required to assure just, reasonable and nondiscriminatory access rates.⁹ Claims such as these are beyond the scope of the current proceeding and should be rejected.¹⁰

⁸ E.g., Bell Atlantic, pp. 3-5; USTA, pp. 2-3.

⁹ See AT&T Comments, filed December 11, 1995, in Price Cap Performance Review of Local Exchange Carriers, CC Docket No. 94-1; AT&T Reply Comments in id., filed February 6, 1996.

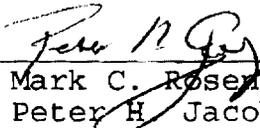
¹⁰ Another egregious example of such special interest pleading is TRA's proposal for a special 90 day expedited "track" for resolution of formal complaints by resellers against their underlying carriers. TRA conveniently ignores the fact that the Telecommunications Act has shortened the period for resolution of complaints under Section 208 to five months from the current fifteen month maximum. Against this background, TRA presents no basis for conferring a preferred position on resellers that could conceivably warrant more expedited treatment of their claims than those of other litigants. Where shorter time intervals are appropriate for resolution of particular types of claims, Congress has prescribed such treatment in the Telecommunications Act. See Communications Act § 260(b) (60 to 120 day limit for telemessaging complaints); id., § 271(d) (90 day limit for complaints alleging violations of RHC long distance entry conditions).

WHEREFORE, the Commission should further streamline its regulatory processes in accordance with the principles and methods described above and in AT&T's Comments.

Respectfully submitted,

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March 29, 1996

APPENDIX A

**COMMENTERS IN PP DOCKET NO. 96-17
(IMPROVING COMMISSION PROCESSES)**

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Officials - International, Inc. ("APCO")

AT&T Corp. ("AT&T")

Bell Atlantic Telephone Companies ("Bell Atlantic")

GTE Service Corporation ("GTE")

Motorola, Inc. ("Motorola")

Motorola Satellite Communications, Inc. And
Comm, Inc. ("Motorola/Comm")

National Association of Broadcasters ("NAB")

National Exchange Carrier Association, Inc. ("NECA")

National Telephone Cooperative Association ("NTCA")

SBC Communications, Inc. ("SBC")

Telecommunications Resellers Association ("TRA")

United States Telephone Association ("USTA")

U S WEST Communications, Inc. ("U S WEST")

Vanguard Cellular Systems, Inc. ("Vanguard")

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Ann Marie Abrahamson, do hereby certify that on this 29th day of March, 1996, a copy of the foregoing "AT&T Reply Comments" was mailed by U.S. first class mail, postage prepaid, to the parties listed below.

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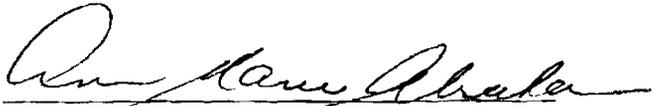
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