



PIEDMONT RURAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE

April 10, 1997

APR 16 1997

cc 96-45
EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

201 Anderson Drive
P.O. Box 249
Lawrens, South Carolina
29360-0249

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M St., NW Room 814
Washington DC 20554

Phone (864) 682-3131
Fax (864) 682-8888

Dear Chairman Hundt,

I urge you to adopt the recommendations submitted to you in an ex parte of March 26 by the state members of the Federal-State Joint Board. That ex parte urges the FCC to adopt the February 13, 1997 Rural Telephone Company Transition Plan proposed by the United States Telephone Association and the Rural Telephone Coalition.

The Joint Board recommendation would freeze federal universal service support, which is essential for maintaining affordable telephone rates, at past investment levels on a per line basis for rural telephone companies. This freeze would chill any incentive rural telephone companies to invest in new infrastructure and would cause severe damage to economic development in rural communities throughout the nation. The effect also could cause local rates to increase. For instance, companies with commitments to upgrade infrastructures, or under a state mandate to do so, will have to request rate increases in order to maintain financial stability.

The Joint Board recommendation would also cut off support for most business lines and all second residences or second lines in residences in high cost areas. This cut off would mean an immediate and significant decrease in the amount of universal service support these consumers lines receive. Negative consequences if this proposal include:

- * significantly higher cost of Internet usage for rural households and businesses that use a second line for their computer hookup.
- * increased prices for telecommunications services, so vital as an incentive for businesses to locate or remain in rural areas;
- * administrative nightmares in attempting to figure out which lines fit in the supported verses an unsupported category.

It is essential that the FCC encourage investment in and maintain affordable access to modern telecommunicaitions services for all Americans, not just the high-end users. Your support for a fair universal service transition plan for rural telephone companies and rural consumers is vital to the future rural economic development of my state/district.

Please let me know how you plan to modify the Joint Board's recommendations to account continued infrastructure and affordable access rates for the the citizens of South Carolina.

Regards,

James P. Wilder
General Manager

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PIEDMONT RURAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE

201 Anderson Drive
P.O. Box 249
Laurens, South Carolina
29360-0249



THE HONORABLE REED HUNDT, CHAIRMAN
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
1919 M ST NW ROOM 814
WASHINGTON DC 20554



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CC 96-45

APR 16 1997



April 8, 1997

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M St NW Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Hundt,

As a third generation owner of a small rural telephone company I urge you to adopt the recommendations submitted to you in an ex parte of March 26 by the state members of the Federal-State Joint Board. That ex parte urges the FCC to adopt the February 13, 1997 Rural Telephone Company Transition Plan proposed by the United States Telephone Association and the Rural Telephone Coalition.

The Joint Board recommendation would freeze federal universal service support, which is essential for maintaining affordable telephone rates, at past investment levels on a per line basis for rural telephone companies. This freeze would chill any incentive for rural telephone companies like mine to invest in new infrastructure and would cause severe damage to economic development in rural communities. The effect also could cause local rates to increase. For instance, companies with commitments to upgrade infrastructures, or under a state mandate to do so, will have to request rate increases in order to maintain financial stability.

The Joint Board recommendation would also cut off support for most business lines and all second residences or second lines in residences in high cost areas such as the one I serve. This cut off would mean an immediate and significant decrease in the amount of universal service support these consumers' lines receive. Negative consequences of this proposal include:

- significantly higher cost of Internet usage for rural households and businesses that use a second line for their computer hookup;
- increased prices for telecommunications services, so vital as an incentive for businesses to locate or remain in rural areas;
- administrative nightmares in attempting to figure out which lines fit in the supported versus an unsupported category.

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The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman
April 8, 1997
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It is essential that the FCC encourage investment in, and maintain affordable access to modern telecommunications services for all Americans, not just the high-end users. Your support for a fair universal service transition plan for rural telephone companies and rural consumers is vital to the future rural economic development of my community.

Please let me know how you plan to modify the Joint Board's recommendations to account continued infrastructure investment and affordable access for all the citizens of Tenino Washington.

Sincerely,



Charles A. Peterson
President

cc: FCC Commissioners: Rachelle Chong
Susan Ness
James Quello



Tenino Telephone Company
P.O. Box 4005, Tenino, WA 98589

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The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M St NW Room 814
Washington, DC 20554

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