

WALT BURNELL

RECEIVED

Docket # 99-11

APR 29 1999

March 23 testimony

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing American Mobile this opportunity to address the issue of rural area telecommunications in the Navajo Nations.

Awareness

It is rare that I have a chance to speak to prospective customers or business partners where the solution that I bring is such an obvious fit for the problem. American Mobile is a communications company that was quite literally created by the FCC in order to address the type of problem that we are here to discuss today. After the FCC granted us a license to provide this kind of service we fulfilled our promise by spending more than 1/2 billion dollars in our own infrastructure and now have the capability to serve anyone in the U.S. with satellite voice telephony. The partnership with the FCC continues as the FCC fights for us to get our spectrum allocation in order to continue to grow and provide service.

I am pleased to say that we have been working with the Navajo Nation and currently provide services to their law enforcement agencies to enable communications to the remote locations throughout the Nation. I am hopeful that the service we provide is accomplishing its objectives of assisting law enforcement, easing emergency situations, and in fact, saving lives.

I am not surprised that, in testimony from your January 28th hearing, telecommunications providers stated that due to the remote nature of the reservations, the lack of "right of ways", the inherent costs of towers and microwaves, etc, that the costs to provide basic service could easily exceed \$35m and would require more than 3 years to build in a traditional land based approach. Satellite technology, on the other hand, allows for an immediate and cost effective solution to these challenges.

Satellite Solution - Today

The inherent nature of the satellite telephone is to stand alone and to communicate through the satellite (that 23000 mile high tower whose beam covers the whole country). We have the technology and the resources today to, at the very least, place a satellite telephone in every remote pueblo in order to ensure that each community has a voice to call for help. We have solutions for a variety of additional communication needs, but the need for immediate emergency communications to prevent the loss of life can be solved immediately. Our infrastructure is in place and operational today to serve even the most remote communities. A broad based solution can be implemented in weeks or months.

Offer of Assistance

Mr. Chairman, there are numerous ways in which our satellite service can solve the immediate emergency communications requirements of the reservations today. American Mobile has studied many ways and configurations of satellite telephones, some not much larger than a laptop PC, including power supplies to ensure that remote communities can communicate. I offer the assistance of American Mobile in working with you and representatives of the Native American communities to develop solutions to both short and longer term communications problems. As we participate together you have my promise to do several things:

1. You have my personal promise that you will have the involvement of the best American Mobile can offer.
2. You have my personal promise that we will bring to you the most cost competitive offering we can provide. Certainly, by comparison to other satellite providers, like Iridium, our usage fees will seem extremely aggressive. That might not be enough, so.....
3. Should any Universal Service Funds become available to support this project, you have my personal promise that they will be used fully and completely to lower the price of the service to the end users.

No. of Copies rec'd 071
List A B C D E

4. I believe in long term partnerships. I believe in communication and I believe in education. If we are able to go forward together, I will, and I hope I have the reference right here, if not please correct me, I will donate 5% of the ongoing service revenue that American Mobile derives from doing business with the Navajo Nations to the American Indian College Fund and Dine College. As I say if the reference is wrong, please correct me, my promise is good.

Closing Thanks

It has been my pleasure to appear before you and offer my testimony today. I am confident that together we can find ways to offer these much needed services in the near future.