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**Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C.**

In the Matter of

- Promotion of Competitive Networks in Local Telecommunications Markets ) WT Docket No. 99-217
- Wireless Communications Association International, Inc. Petition for Rulemaking to Amend Section 1.4000 of the Commission's Rules to Preempt Restrictions on Subscriber Premises Reception or Transmission Antennas Designed To Provide Fixed Wireless Services )
- Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association Petition for Rule Making and Amendment of the Commission's Rules to Preempt State and Local Imposition of Discriminatory And/Or Excessive Taxes and Assessments )
- Implementation of the Local Competition Provisions in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 ) CC Docket No. 96-98

**REPLY COMMENTS  
OF ALLIED RISER COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION**

Michael R. Carper  
General Counsel  
Allied Riser Communications Corporation  
1700 Pacific Avenue, Suite 400  
Dallas, TX 75201  
(214) 210-3000

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## Summary

Allied Riser Communications Corporation ("ARC") is a facilities-based provider of broadband data, voice and video communications services to small- and medium-sized businesses in multi-tenant environments ("MTEs").

The FCC should be cautious about imposing new restrictions or obligations on building owners or carriers seeking building access. ARC is concerned that new regulations may impede its ability to obtain use of limited building access facilities, and thus have effects contrary to the FCC's objectives.

There are many types of carriers that seek to use the limited amount of building access facilities. A carrier providing advanced broadband services over fiber-optic in-building networks to all tenants in a building, such as ARC, is substantially different from a carrier that may offer a different set of services only to a few tenants over copper-based or radio facilities.

Regulations will not be able to sort the varied characteristics and capabilities of carriers, compare them to tenant requirements for each building, evaluate the space available in each building, and determine how much space to allocate to certain carriers and on what terms. While regulations cannot take all these factors into account, our experience is that market forces do.

In these reply comments, ARC makes three points: (1) the record in this proceeding contains strong support from diverse interests for continuing the

current marketplace conditions for access to MTEs; (2) proponents of mandatory access regulations rely on erroneous arguments regarding marketplace incentives for property owners and managers as well as the ability of regulations to guarantee building access for all providers; and (3) the FCC's findings in other proceedings on the benefits of an unregulated market for Internet access and related services should cause the FCC to refrain from regulating building access for broadband networks.

The marketplace for building access is competitive and diverse. Thousands of property owners and managers are licensing access to telecom providers in the context of the unique physical characteristics and tenants of each building. The market is working toward the FCC's objective of widely available, competitive, advanced networks. Facing the penalties and rewards of the competitive market, property owners and managers play an important role in licensing building access to achieve this objective because of the limited building access facilities and cherry-picking desires of many carriers. As new technologies are introduced and tenants demand access to these technologies, building owners are in the best position to respond to these demands on a building-specific basis.

Any regulations which would restrict this market process would be less effective in allocating limited building access facilities and undermine achievement of the FCC's objectives.

## **Introduction**

Allied Riser Communications Corporation ("ARC"), a facilities-based provider of broadband data, voice and video communications services to small- and medium-sized businesses in multi-tenant environments ("MTEs"),<sup>1</sup> submits these reply comments in response to the above-captioned notices of proposed rulemaking ("Notice").

Our comments in this proceeding stated that we are rapidly deploying in MTEs the facilities-based, competitive broadband services sought by the FCC under current market conditions. The FCC should be cautious about imposing new restrictions or obligations on building owners or carriers seeking building access. ARC is concerned that new regulations may impede its ability to obtain use of limited building access facilities, and thus have effects contrary to the FCC's objectives.

As evidenced by the comments filed in this proceeding, there are many types of carriers that seek to use the limited amount of building access facilities. A carrier providing advanced broadband services over fiber-optic in-building

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<sup>1</sup> ARC owns and operates in-building fiber-optic networks inside 61 office buildings with more than 33.6 million rentable square feet in 16 major metropolitan areas in the United States. In addition, we have agreements with building owners to install and operate fiber-optic networks in more than 1000 office buildings with more than 325 million rentable square feet.

networks to all tenants in a building, such as ARC, is substantially different from a carrier that may offer a different set of services only to a few tenants over copper-based or radio facilities. Regulations will not be able to sort the varied characteristics and capabilities of carriers, compare them to tenant requirements for each building, evaluate the space available in each building and determine how much space to allocate to certain carriers and on what terms.

Our "building-centric" approach makes efficient use for all tenants of the physically-constrained resources of building entrances, equipment space and risers. While regulations cannot take all these factors into account, our experience is that market forces do. Under current unregulated market conditions, we expect to expand rapidly under agreements we have negotiated or are negotiating with property managers.

In these reply comments, ARC makes three points: (1) the record in this proceeding contains strong support from diverse interests for continuing the current marketplace conditions for access to MTEs; (2) proponents of mandatory access regulations rely on erroneous arguments regarding marketplace incentives for property owners and managers as well as the ability of regulations to guarantee building access for all providers; and (3) the FCC's findings in other proceedings on the benefits of an unregulated market for Internet access and related services should cause the FCC to refrain from regulating building access for broadband networks.

**1. Broad Record Support for Continuing Current Marketplace Conditions.**

ARC's extensive experience in acquiring access rights from landlords for the use of building entrances, equipment space and risers to provide its communications services demonstrates that (a) building access is available to new providers and is occurring in the competitive marketplace, and (b) new regulations could be detrimental to effective use of building access for telecom services. Put differently, building owners are currently seeking to license access to telecom providers that will maximize the attractiveness of their properties by efficiently using limited building access facilities for providing services their tenants demand. Mandatory access regulations will cause these scarce resources to be exhausted on carriers based on regulatory prowess rather than the characteristics that are important to tenants.

The record in this proceeding shows broad support for these points from diverse interests.

A wide range of property owners and managers<sup>2</sup> presented strong evidence that the current marketplace, and especially the decision-making role of property owners and managers, promotes the widespread availability of competitive,

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<sup>2</sup> See Building Owners and Managers Association International, et al. ("Real Access Alliance"); Cornerstone Properties, et al. ("Joint Comments"); Equity Office Properties Trust; Apex Site Management; Arden Realty; and dozens of smaller property owners and managers.

advanced telecom offerings. Property owners and managers state that they seek to have competitive, advanced telecom services available to their tenants in order to meet tenants' needs and increase the attractiveness and value of their buildings. They assert that they have granted building access in reasonable time frames in response to most requests from telecom providers. Moreover, they explain that they are actively pursuing access agreements with telecom providers that will efficiently use their physically-constrained building access resources to the greatest benefit of their tenants.

In particular, property owners and managers express their disappointment that many telecom providers seeking building access do not effectively use building access resources to meet tenants' needs.<sup>3</sup> Many license agreements are granted to telecom providers that lock up the facilities but fail to build networks for long periods of time. Many carriers intend to use scarce building access resources to cherry-pick some tenants but fail to serve most tenants. Furthermore, many carriers intend to serve only tenants in one or a few buildings out of an owner's or manager's varied portfolio of MTEs, making it harder for an owner or manager to attract new carriers to serve tenants in its other buildings.

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<sup>3</sup> See Joint Comments at 15-16; Apex Site Management at 5; Equity Office Properties Trust at 2-5.

In managing the unique mix of facilities and tenants in each MTE, property owners and managers state that they are negotiating with telecom providers to achieve precisely what the FCC is seeking – improved penetration of competitive, advanced telecom services to all tenants of all MTEs.<sup>4</sup> ARC's experience in dealing with property owners and managers confirms this.

Numerous other commenters also provide record support that the current unregulated market conditions are working to achieve the FCC's objective. Incumbent local exchange carriers (United States Telephone Association, Bell Companies and others) point to the CLECs' access to MTEs under current market conditions, and the likelihood that mandatory access would not advance the FCC's objectives. Cable television companies and other video providers (Independent Cable Telecommunications Association; OpTel) point to some of the practicable difficulties of mandatory access for numerous providers in terms of customer disruption, service outages, property damage, safety and health risks, etc. Other opponents to mandatory access include local governments (National Association of Counties, et al.), electric utilities and shared tenant service providers.

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<sup>4</sup> See Real Access Alliance at 13-24.

**2. Proponents of Mandatory Access Regulations Rely on Erroneous Arguments.**

The record demonstrates two errors undermining arguments for mandatory access regulations.

Error 1: Allegation that property owners and managers have economic incentives to deny access to competitive providers or to coerce them into paying unreasonably high fees, which must be remedied through FCC regulations.<sup>5</sup>

The record demonstrates the competitive marketplace already gives property owners and managers incentives to act according to the FCC's objectives for MTE access.<sup>6</sup> Property owners and managers are granting building access on competitive terms and are responding to tenants' demands for competitive, advanced telecom services. The growth of ARC (which has obtained access to over 1000 buildings containing more than 325 million square feet) and other competitive providers (landline as well as wireless) demonstrates that the market is working.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Competitive Telecommunications Association ("CompTel") at 4-5; Association for Local Telecommunications Services ("ALTS") at 6-18; WinStar at 16-18; Teligent at 9-10; AT&T at 6-8.

<sup>6</sup> See Real Access Alliance at 8-9 ("Ancillary revenue from telecommunications providers is not substantial enough for building owners to put tenant rent revenues at risk."); Joint Comments at 9; Shared Communications Services at 6-9.

<sup>7</sup> See Teligent at 9 ("Teligent expects to have general access to over 6,000 MTEs by year's end and will have done so entirely pursuant to voluntary

(continued...)

Landlords who exclude telecom providers desired by tenants decrease the attractiveness of their buildings to tenants and suffer from lower property values. The commercial office building market is highly unconcentrated and competitive.<sup>8</sup> In fact, that market is clearly less concentrated than the local exchange market, the long distance market, and the cable television market.

Property owners and managers explain that any perception of an anticompetitive bottleneck is based largely on a combination of physical constraints on building access facilities, ordinary business issues that arise in lease negotiations, and issues about making advanced networks widely available to tenants.<sup>9</sup> Mandatory access regulations are unnecessary to promote the FCC's objectives.

Error 2: Allegation that mandatory access regulations will make building access readily available to all requesting carriers.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> (...continued)  
negotiations."); WinStar at 3 ("WinStar is proud to be the single most successful entity in obtaining building access rights, having obtained 5,500 buildings to date, 700 in the last quarter."); AT&T at 8 (AT&T has deployed its own loop facilities in 123 commercial buildings in Los Angeles). These are not, as ALTS (p. 4) claims, "isolated examples wherein the marketplace has resulted in MTE access agreements that afford tenants the ability to take advantage of competitive telecommunications options" (emphasis added).

<sup>8</sup> See Real Access Alliance at 5-9.

<sup>9</sup> See Real Access Alliance at 29-31; Apex Site Management at 4.

<sup>10</sup> See WinStar at 10 (FCC must guarantee competitive telecom providers  
(continued...))

Even if the FCC had the authority to impose such regulations on building owners and concluded that such regulations would serve the public interest (ARC believes the FCC lacks such authority and cannot so find), such regulations cannot overcome the physical constraints of limited building access facilities. The record demonstrates that numerous telecom providers operating under mandatory access regulations will rapidly exhaust the capabilities of building entrances, equipment space and risers.<sup>11</sup>

Regulations cannot guarantee access for all telecom providers. Consequently, there will still be excluded telecom providers -- including new providers of innovative advanced services -- complaining that they cannot serve tenants in certain MTEs. There will be other telecom providers complaining about their inability to expand their networks, or about the interference to their operations from the numerous telecom providers packed into limited space. Many tenants will complain that the telecom providers in their buildings fail to satisfy their needs, and that other telecom providers that would be right for them are excluded.

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<sup>10</sup> (...continued)  
nondiscriminatory and reasonable access to customers in MTEs); Teligent at 16; CompTel at 5.

<sup>11</sup> See Joint Comments at 17-25; Real Access Alliance at 66-68.

Given the limitations on building access facilities, it would be impossible to implement regulations effectively distinguishing which providers to allow in and on what terms. The building-by-building, provider-by-provider analysis being performed by property owners and managers, together with the rewards and punishments of the competitive marketplace, is making these selections. As new technologies are introduced and tenants demand access to these technologies, building owners are in the best position to respond to these demands on a building-specific basis. Mandatory access regulations are likely to do worse than the competitive marketplace in allocating these scarce resources, and may lead to exclusion more often of efficient users of building access facilities which would serve all tenants (such as ARC).

In summary, the marketplace for building access is competitive and diverse. Thousands of property owners and managers are licensing access to telecom providers in the context of the unique physical characteristics and tenants of each building. The market is working toward the FCC's objective of widely available, competitive, advanced networks. Facing the penalties and rewards of the competitive market, property owners and managers play an important role in licensing building access to achieve this objective because of the limited building access facilities and cherry-picking desires of many carriers. Any regulations which would

restrict this market process would be less effective in allocating limited building access facilities and undermine achievement of the FCC's objective.

3. **The FCC's Commitment to Refraining from Regulating the Internet Requires Restraint in Building Access Regulations.**

Much of the demand for building access rights by ARC as well as by many other carriers is for deploying broadband capabilities, particularly Internet access.<sup>12</sup> The FCC has repeatedly found that regulation of such services is unnecessary and likely to be detrimental. Mandatory building access regulations are similarly unnecessary and likely to be detrimental to the deployment of such services.

The FCC has taken an "unregulation" approach to Internet access, with great benefits to the public.<sup>13</sup> For example, the FCC on September 15, 1999 declined to require ILECs to unbundle the facilities used to provide high-speed Internet access and other data services, reflecting the FCC's desire "to do nothing to

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<sup>12</sup> See Notice at para. 26; Teligent at 4-5; WinStar Form 10-K (Dec. 31, 1998) ("The Need for a Broadband Network Solution").

<sup>13</sup> See Speech of Chairman Kennard to the National Cable Television Association, June 15, 1999, 1999 FCC LEXIS 2776 at \*10 ("[W]e have to get these [broadband] pipes built. But how do we do it? We let the marketplace do it. If we've learned anything about the Internet in government over the last 15 years, it's that it thrived quite nicely without the intervention of government."); Oxman, The FCC and the Unregulation of the Internet (Office of Plans and Policy, July 1999).

discourage the rapid deployment of advanced services."<sup>14</sup> Such policies protect monopoly ILECs from unbundling obligations, and they should certainly protect competitive property owners and managers from mandatory access regulations.

The FCC has recently found that advanced telecom capabilities are reasonably deployed for all Americans and that it should rely as much as possible on free markets.<sup>15</sup> The record in this proceeding confirms that tenants in MTEs are receiving the benefits of competitive, advanced networks under current market conditions.<sup>16</sup>

For any particular proposed regulation, there are always entities that perceive benefits to themselves from granting them new rights or imposing on others new obligations. Often, these self-interests lead to inconsistencies in support for unregulated Internet development.

For example, AT&T has in other proceedings argued against an open access requirement for Internet access through cable television systems' broadband capabilities, and the FCC has supported restraint from such regulatory require-

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<sup>14</sup> "FCC Promotes Local Telecommunications Competition; Adopts Rules on Unbundling of Network Elements," FCC News Release 99-238 at 2 (Sept. 15, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> See Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability, 14 FCC Rcd. 2398, at paras. 5, 7 (1999).

<sup>16</sup> See Real Access Alliance at 9-13; Joint Comments at 6-9.

ments.<sup>17</sup> In this proceeding, nevertheless, AT&T argues for mandatory access and unbundling requirements imposed on building owners and other carriers based on expansive interpretation of Section 224.<sup>18</sup> Even though AT&T notes that it has successfully negotiated building access for its local loops in a large number of buildings,<sup>19</sup> it would like regulations to (a) eliminate any delays or above-cost charges for building access, but (b) allow AT&T to deny requests on any terms for access to its monopoly cable television facilities.

Although some individual parties take inconsistent, self-serving positions with regard to access regulations, the FCC should not deviate from its conclusions and policies on the Internet and advanced telecommunications capabilities. As with other Internet-related areas, new regulations in the area of building access are unnecessary and likely to be detrimental.

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<sup>17</sup> See Applications for Consent to the Transfer of Control of Licenses and Section 214 Authorizations from TCI to AT&T, 14 FCC Rcd. 3160, at paras. 74, 90 (1999) (citing statements from the financial community that "equal access would harm the deployment of advanced telecommunications infrastructure"); Brief of the FCC as *amicus curiae* in AT&T Corp. v. City of Portland at 18, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, No. 99-35609 (filed Aug. 16, 1999) ("the Commission has cautioned against regulatory actions that could skew the development of broadband capability or delay broadband deployment").

<sup>18</sup> See AT&T at 9-23.

<sup>19</sup> See AT&T at 8.

ARC and many other carriers pursuing building access are seeking to meet the growing demand for high-speed Internet access and other broadband services. The tenants of MTEs are attractive customers for these services, and building owners responding to the unregulated marketplace will see that carriers obtain building access to provide these services to MTE tenants. However, with limited building access facilities, not all telecom providers can gain access to all tenants. Instead of mandatory access regulations, the FCC should allow the unregulated marketplace to address this aspect of Internet services. As in other aspects of the Internet, FCC regulations could slow the growth and availability as well as impair the quality of these services.

Conclusion

Under current market conditions ARC is rapidly deploying the facilities-based, competitive broadband services sought by the FCC. The record demonstrates broad support for continuing to use market forces to govern carrier access to MTEs. Regulations are unnecessary to meet the objectives of the FCC with regard to service providers, tenants or landlords. FCC building access regulations are unlikely to meet their objective in light of the physical constraints on building access facilities as well as the difficulties in assuring that new telecom capabilities reach all tenants.

Respectfully submitted,

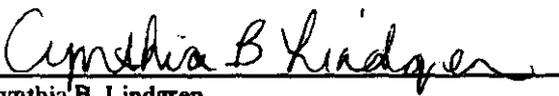
ALLIED RISER COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

By: Michael R. Carper / EFR  
Michael R. Carper

September 27, 1999

Association for Local Telecommunications  
Services  
888 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006  
Attn: Jonathan M. Askin

Association for Local Telecommunications  
Services  
c/o Willkie Farr & Gallagher  
Suite 600  
1155 21<sup>st</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Philip L. Verveer  
Gunnar D. Halley

  
Cynthia B. Lindgren  
Cynthia B. Lindgren

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Cynthia B. Lindgren, hereby certify that on this 27<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1999, copies of the foregoing Reply to Comments of Allied Riser Communications Corporation filed today with the FCC in WT Docket No. 99-217/CC Docket No. 96-98 were served by U.S. Mail or by Federal Express delivery (\*) on the following parties:

Chairman William Kennard\*  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals II  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Suite 8-B201  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth\*  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals II  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Suite 8-A302  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Michael K. Powell\*  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals II  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Suite 8-A204  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Susan Ness\*  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals II  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Suite 8-B115  
Washington, DC 20554

Commissioner Gloria Tristani\*  
Federal Communications Commission  
The Portals II  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Suite 8-C302  
Washington, DC 20554

American Water Works Association  
1401 New York Avenue, NW  
Suite 640  
Washington, DC 20005  
Attn: John H. Sullivan, P.E.

Coordinating Council of Cooperatives  
465 Grand Street  
New York, NY  
Attn: Allen L. Thurgood

Duke-Weeks Realty Corporation  
8888 Keystone Crossing  
Suite 1200  
Indianapolis, IN 46240  
Attn: Thomas L. Hefner

Diamond Lakes Apartment Homes  
2700 Ambassador Caffery Parkway  
Lafayette, LA 70506  
Attn: Dawn Williams-Deare

411 Co., Ltd.  
411 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 1015  
Fort Worth, TX 76102  
Attn: Sharron A. Beck

Green Store Partners LLC  
P.O. Box 2936  
Palos Verdes, CA 90274  
Attn: Carter M. Comaford

Wexenthaller Realty Management  
3170 N. Sheridan Road  
Chicago, IL 60657  
Attn: Bruce Wechsler

Sterling House  
5050 Hawthorne Drive  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
Attn: Barbara A. Woodworth

Nottingham Apartments  
228 Sanders Ferry Road  
Hendersonville, TN 37075  
Attn: Amelia B. Knight

Crossman Properties, L.L.C.  
c/o Bexley Village  
700 Bexley Drive  
Greenwood, IN 46143  
Attn: Minor L. Best

Crossman Properties, L.L.C.  
c/o Barton Farms  
368 Farmhouse Lane  
Greenwood, IN 46143  
Attn: Minor L. Best

Radwyn Garden Apartments  
275 Bryn Mawr Avenue  
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010  
Attn: Floyd Lee

Chapel View Estates  
Attn: Chris Pierquet

Amalgamated Housing Corporation  
98 Van Cortlandt Park South  
Bronx, NY 10463  
Attn: Ed Yaker

Crossman Properties, L.L.C.  
c/o Shaker Square  
2375 Shaker Lane  
Lebanon, IN 46052  
Attn: Minor L. Best

EastGroup Properties  
Post Office Box 22728  
Jackson, MS 39225  
Attn: Leland R. Speed

Crossman Properties, L.L.C.  
c/o Woodberry  
2051 East Main Street  
Danville, IN 46122

Sizzler Real Estate Management Co., Inc.  
900 Downtowner Boulevard, Suite A  
Mobile, AL 36609  
Attn: Pamela W. Monroe

Windsor Realty Fund III  
c/o Windsor at Polo Run  
100 Polo Run Drive  
Yardley, PA 19067  
Attn: Mary Jo Schneider

The National Association of Counties, et. al.  
c/o Miller & Van Eaton P.L.L.C.  
1155 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. #1000  
Washington, DC 20036-4306  
Attn: Frederick E. Eltrod III  
Marci L. Frischkorn

Winstar Communications, Inc.  
c/o Willkie Farr & Gallagher  
Three Lafayette Centre  
1155 21<sup>st</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036-3384  
Attn: Philip L. Verveer  
Angie Kronenberg  
Sophie J. Keefer

Fixed Wireless Communications Coalition  
1300 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Attn: Crystal Rogers-Starkey

The Real Access Alliance  
c/o Miller & Van Eaton, P.L.C.  
Suite 1000  
1155 Connecticut Avenue  
Washington, DC 20036-4306  
Attn: Matthew C. Ames  
Nicholas P. Miller  
William Malone  
Marci L. Frischkorn

Global Crossing Ltd.  
c/o Paul Kouroupas  
Senior Counsel, World Wide Regulatory &  
Industry Affairs  
Global Crossing Development Co.  
12 Headquarters Plaza  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor North Tower  
Morristown, NJ 07960

Ameritech  
Gerald A. Friederichs  
Michael S. Pabian  
Counsel for Ameritech  
39<sup>th</sup> Floor  
30 S. Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 60606

Metromedia Fiber Network Services, Inc.  
One Meadowlands Plaza  
East Rutherford, NJ 07073-2137  
Attn: Karen Nations

Teligent, Inc.  
c/o Willkie Farr & Gallagher  
Three Lafayette Centre  
1155 21<sup>st</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Philip L. Verveer  
Gunnar D. Halley

McLeodUSA Incorporated  
McLeodUSA Technology Park  
6400 C Street SW  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406-3177  
Attn: Richard S. Lipman  
Associate General Counsel

Global Crossing Ltd.  
c/o Preston Gates Ellis & Rouvelas Meeds  
LLP  
1735 New York Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20006  
Attn: Martin L. Stern  
John Longstreth  
Lisa L. Friedlander

NEXTLINK Communications, Inc.  
c/o Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and  
Popeo, P.C.  
701 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20004-2608

NEXTLINK Communications, Inc.  
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Cathleen A. Massey

GTE Service Corporation  
John F. Raposa  
600 Hidden Ridge  
HQE)3J27  
Irving, TX 75038

Level 3 Communications, LLC  
1025 Eldorado Drive  
Broomfield, CO 80021  
Attn: Patricia Paoletta  
William P. Hunt, III

Arden Realty, Inc.  
c/o Donelan Cleary Wood & Maser, P.C.  
1100 New York Avenue, N.W. #750  
Washington, DC 20005-3934  
Attn: James R. Hobson

Apex Site Management, Inc.  
c/o Donelan Cleary Wood & Maser, P.C.  
1100 New York Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 750  
Washington, DC 20005-3934  
Attn: James R. Hobson  
Heidi C. Pearlman

Florida Power & Light Company  
9250 West Flagler Street  
Miami, FL 33174  
Attn: Jean Flagler

Kansas City Power & Light Company  
1201 Walnut  
P.O. Box 118679  
Kansas City, MO 64141-9679  
Attn: Michael A. Rump

BellSouth Corporation  
c/o M. Robert Sutherland  
Theodore R. Kingsley  
Suite 1700  
1155 Peachtree Street, N.E.  
Atlanta, GA 30306-3610

GTE Service Corporation  
Andre J. Lachance  
1850 M Street, N.W.  
Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20036

Level 3 Communications, LLC  
c/o Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman, LLP  
3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20007

Arden Realty, Inc.  
c/o David Swartz  
General Counsel  
11601 Wilshire Boulevard, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Apex Site Management, Inc.  
c/o Richard B. Stern  
Vice President and General Counsel  
555 North Lane, Suite 6138  
Conshohocken, PA 19428

Cinergy Corp.  
139 East Fourth Street  
P.O. Box 960  
Cincinnati, OH 45201  
Attn: Paul A. Colbert

American Electric Power Service Corpora-  
tion, et. al.  
c/o McDermott, Will & Emery  
600 13<sup>th</sup> Street  
Washington, DC 20005-3096  
Attn: Shirley S. Fujimoto  
Christine M. Gill  
Thomas P. Steindler

The Electric Utilities Coalition  
c/o Hunton & Williams  
1900 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
Attn: Walter Steimel, Jr.  
Edwin G. Kichline

The United Telecom Council  
1140 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 1140  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Jeffrey L. Sheldon  
Brett Kilbourne

Personal Communications Industry Association  
500 Montgomery Street, Suite 700  
Alexandria, VA 22314-1561  
Attn: Mary McDermott  
Chief of Staff and Sr. V.P.  
Brent H. Weingardt  
V.P. Government Relations

SpectraPoint Wireless, LLC  
1125 E. Collins  
Richardson, TX 75081  
Attn: Scott Marin

Avista Corporation  
c/o Paine, Hamblen, Coffin, Brooke & Miller,  
LLP  
717 West Sprague Avenue  
Suite 1200  
Spokane, WA 99201-3505  
Attn: Robert E. Neate

First Regional TeleCOM, LLC  
c/o Blumenfeld & Cohen - Technology Law  
Group  
1625 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Glenn B. Manishin  
Lisa N. Anderson

MCI WorldCom, Inc.  
1801 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006  
Attn: Larry Fenster

Edison Electric Insititute  
701 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004  
Attn: Laurence Brown

Wireless Communications Association International, Inc.  
1140 Connecticut Ave., N.W.  
Suite 810  
Washington, DC 20036-40001  
Attn: Andrew Krieg  
President

Metricom, Inc.  
c/o Shook, Hardy & Bacon, LLP  
600 14<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20005-0004  
Attn: Henry M. Rivera  
Larry S. Solomon  
J. Thomas Nolan

First Regional TeleCOM, LLC  
962 Wayne Avenue, Suite 701  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Attn: Michael Specht  
President

RCN Corporation  
c/o Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman, LLP  
3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20007-5116  
Attn: William L. Fishman  
Kathleen L. Greenan

Adelphia Business Solutions  
500 Thomas Street  
DDI Plaza II, Suite 400  
Bridgeville, PA 15017  
Attn: John B. Glicksman, Esq.  
Janet S. Livengood, Esq.

Adelphia Business Solutions  
c/o Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman, LLP  
3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20007  
Attn: Dana Frix, Esq.  
Kathleen L. Greenan, Esq.

Bluestar Communications, Inc.  
401 Church Street  
Nashville, TN 37219  
Attn: Norton Cutler

Bluestar Communications, Inc.  
c/o Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman,  
LLP  
3000 K Street, N.W., Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20007  
Attn: Andrew D. Lipman  
Patrick Donovan

Department of Information Technology and  
Telecommunications of the City of New York  
Office of the Corporation Counsel  
100 Church Street  
New York, NY 10007  
Attn: Michael D. Hess, Esq.  
Bruce Regal, Esq.

Department of Information Technology and  
Telecommunications of the City of New York  
General Counsel  
11 MetroTech Center  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Attn: Elaine Reiss, Esq.

City of Richmond, Virginia  
Norman B. Sales, Esq.  
Senior Assistant City Attorney  
Office of the City Attorney  
Suite 300  
900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

City of Ishpeming, Michigan  
100 E. Division Street  
Ishpeming, MI 49849  
Attn: John D. Korhonen  
City Manager

City and County of San Francisco  
Office of the City Attorney  
City Hall, Room 234  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Attn: Louise H. Renne

Department of Defense  
Department of the Army  
United States Legal Services Agency  
901 North Stuart Street  
Arlington, VA 22203-1837  
Attn: Robert N. Kittel

State of New York  
Department of Public Service  
Three Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12223-1350  
Attn: Lawrence G. Malone  
General Counsel

ACUTA, Inc., et. al.  
152 West Zandale Drive, Suite 200  
Lexington, KY 40503  
Attn: Anthony Mordosky  
President

Community Associations Institute et. al.  
1630 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
attn: Lara E. Howley, Esq

Competition Policy Institute  
1156 15<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Suite 520  
Washington, DC 20005  
Attn: Ronald Binz  
Debra Berlyn

Texas Office of Public Utility Counsel  
1701 N. Congress Avenue,  
Suite 9-180  
Austin, TX 78701  
Attn: Rich Guzman  
Alberto Levy

SBC Communications Inc.  
One Bell Plaza, Room 3024  
Dallas, TX 75202  
Attn: Alfred G. Richter Jr.  
Roger K. Toppins  
Mark Royer

Dallas Wireless Broadband, L.P.  
d/b/a Coserv Broadband  
c/o Gardere & Wynne, L.L.P.  
3000 Thanksgiving Tower  
1601 Elm Street  
Dallas, TX 75201-4761  
Attn: Robert J. Miller

Entergy Services, Inc.  
639 Loyola Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70113  
Attn: J. Wayne Anderson  
Matthew R. Suffern  
J. Christopher Neel

Sprint Corporation  
1850 M St., NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Leon M. Kesetenbaum  
Jay Keithley  
Norina T. Moy

Competition Policy Institute  
c/o Ireland, Stapleton, Pryor & Pascow, P.C.  
1675 Broadway, Suite 2600  
Denver, CO 80202  
Attn: Henry L. Pliskin

Minnesota Power, Inc.  
30 West Superior Street  
Duluth, MN 55802  
Attn: Ingrid Kane-Johnson, Esq.

RF Development, LLC  
4949 Hampden Lane, Suite 212B  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
Attn: Charles E. Walters  
Managing Director

Cooperative Housing Coalition  
1401 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20005  
Attn: Terry Lewis, Esq.  
Coordinator

General Communication, Inc.  
1500 K Street, NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005  
Attn: Kathy L. Shobert  
Director, Federal Affairs

Equity Office Properties Trust  
Two North Riverside Plaza  
Suite 2200  
Chicago, IL 60606  
Attn: Michael Steele  
Sean Burns

Sprint Corporation  
7301 College Blvd.  
Overland Park, KS 66210  
Attn: Richard Morris  
Craig T. Smith

Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association  
1250 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Andrea D. Williams  
Michael F. Altschul  
Randall S. Coleman

ICG Telecom Group, Inc.  
c/o ICG Communications, Inc.  
161 Inverness Drive West  
Englewood, CO 80112  
Attn: Cindy Z. Schonhaut  
Julia Waysdorf  
LaCharles Keesee

OpTel, Inc.  
c/o Goldberg, Godles, Wiener & Wright  
1229 Nineteenth Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036

Cornerstone Properties, et. al.  
c/o Riser Management Systems  
200 Church Street  
P.O. Box 1264  
Burlington, VT 05401

South Central Wireless, Inc.  
c/o Bennet & Bennet, PLLC  
1000 Vermont Avenue, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005  
Attn: Gregory W. Whiteaker  
Edward D. Kania

Ensemble Communications, Inc.  
6256 Greenwich Drive, Suite 400  
San Diego, CA 92122  
Attn: Bill S. Simpson  
VP Customer Support

Shared Communications Services, Inc.  
c/o Fischbein Badillo Wagner Harding  
909 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022  
Attn: Donald N. David, Esq.

Independent Cable & Telecommunications Association  
c/o Arent Fox Kintner Plotkin & Kahn  
1050 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Deborah C. Costlow  
Treg Tremont

OpTel, Inc.  
1111 W. Mockingbird Lane  
Dallas, TX 75247  
Attn: Michael Katzenstein

United States Telephone Association  
1401 H Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005  
Attn: Lawrence E. Sarjeant  
Linda Kent  
Keith Townsend  
John Hunter  
Julie E. Rones

Central Texas Communications, Inc.  
c/o Bennet & Bennet, PLLC  
1000 Vermont Avenue, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005  
Attn: Gregory W. Whiteaker  
Edward D. Kania

HighSpeed.Com, L.L.C.  
1520 Kelly Place, Suite 202  
Walla Walla, WA 99362  
Attn: Kristian E. Hedine  
Director of Legal Affairs

Cincinnati Bell Telephone Company  
c/o Frost & Jacobs LLP  
201 East Fifth Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202  
Attn: Jack B. Harrison, Esq.

AT&T Corp.  
c/o Sidley & Austin  
1722 I Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006  
Attn: David L. Lawson  
Daniel Meron  
Paul J. Zidlicky  
Rudolph M. Kammerer

CAIS, Inc.  
c/o Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman, LLP  
3000 K Street, NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20007  
Attn: Charles A. Rohe  
John M. Beahn

Institute of Real Estate Management  
World Trade Center  
350 S. Figueroa St., Suite 292  
Los Angeles, CA 90071  
Attn: Edward J. McKeegan  
President, MEI Real Estate  
Services

Towne Properties Asset Management Com-  
pany  
1055 St. Paul Place  
Cincinnati, OH 45202-1687  
Attn: Robert J. Wahlke  
President

Greater St. Paul Building Owners & Managers  
Association  
W-2950 First National Bank Building  
332 Minnesota Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101-1379  
Attn: William A. Buth  
President

AT&T Corp.  
295 North Maple Avenue  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920  
Attn: Marc C. Rosenblum  
Stephen C. Garavito

AT&T Corp.  
c/o Willkie Farr & Gallagher  
3 Lafayette Centre  
1155 21<sup>st</sup> Street, N.W., Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Frank M. Buono  
Pamela S. Strauss

Bell Atlantic Telephone Companies  
1320 North Court House Road  
Eighth Floor  
Arlington, VA 22201  
Attn: Lawrence W. Katz  
Michael E. Glover

Trust Property Management  
12000 Ford Road, Suite 245  
Dallas, TX 75234  
Attn: Diana Cross  
Regional Manager

Wisconsin Management Company, Inc.  
2040 South Park Street  
Madison, WI 53713  
Attn: Russ Endres  
President

Berkshire Industrial Corporation  
2 Parklawn Drive  
Bethel, CT 06801  
Attn: Richard E. Steiner  
Vice President

Federation of New York Housing Cooperatives  
138-10 Frankling Avenue, Suite 8K  
Flushing, NY 11374  
Attn: Greg Carlson  
President

Lincolnwood Cooperatives, Inc.  
2101 Mark Lane  
Kokomo, IN 46902  
Attn: Garrett W. Floyd

CarrAmerica Realty Corporation  
1850 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006  
Attn: Richard W. Greninger  
Manager Director

Total Service Development, LLC  
P.O. Box 12206  
Green Bay, WI 54307-2206  
Attn: Richard Stephenson  
General Manager

Windsor at McAlpine Place  
6800 Fisher's Farm Lane  
Charlotte, NC 28277  
Attn: Marcie Williams  
Property Manager

Windsor at Eastborough  
7024 E. Kellogg  
Wichita, KS 67207  
Attn: Jason Simon  
Property Manager

Draper and Kramer, Incorporated  
33 West Monroe Street  
Chicago, IL 60603-5401  
Attn: Greg Martin

Gross Builders  
14300 Ridge Road, Suite 100  
North Royalton, OH 44133  
Attn: Gary L. Gross

Mark III Management Corporation  
7321 Shadeland Station, Suite 220  
Indianapolis, IN 46256  
Attn: Charles A. Pechette  
President

Polen Mortgage & Realty  
P.O. Box 103  
G-8308 Office Park Drive  
Grand Blanc, MI 48439-0103  
Attn: Robert M. Blick  
President

Gryboski Rental Properties  
P.O. Box 13535  
Green Bay, WI 54307-3535  
Attn: Catherine D. Gryboski  
Roger R. Gryboski

Lincoln Springs Apartment Homes  
1170 South Chelton Road  
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Central Management, Inc.  
5444 Westheimer, Suite 1925  
Houston, TX 77056  
Attn: Jack Tennyson  
Vice President, Operations

Windsor at Fairlane Meadow  
4900 Heather Drive  
Dearborn, MI 48126  
Attn: Lee Anne Powell  
Property Manager

State Wide Investors Inc.  
4401 Atlantic Ave., Suite 300  
Long Beach, CA 90807-2246  
Attn: Roy E. Hearrean  
President

Essex Property Trust, Inc.  
925 East Meadow Drive  
Palo Alto, CA 94303  
Attn: Keith R. Guericke  
President and CEO

Tara Cooperatives, Inc.  
346 East Essex Lane  
Fort Wayne, IN 46825  
Attn: Robyn Bolle  
Associate Property Manager

Manchester Village, Inc.  
4233 Holly Hill Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46241  
Attn: Robyn Bolle  
Associate Property Manager

Drucker & Falk, LLC  
9286 Warwick Boulevard  
Newport News, VA 23607-1500  
Attn: John A. Munick, Jr.  
President

Competitive Telecommunications Association  
1900 M Street, N.W., Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Carol Ann Bischoff  
Robert M. McDowell

Jamestown Homes, Inc.  
1700 Hobson Road  
Fort Wayne, IN 46805  
Attn: Robyn Bolle  
Associate Property Manager

Harbert Realty Services  
601 South Lake Destiny Road  
Suite 180  
Maitland, FL 32751  
Attn: Betsy L. Owens  
Regional Property Manager

Orchard Glen Cooperative, Inc.  
1001 Sugar Maple Circle  
Bloomington, IN 47403  
Attn: Robyn Bolle  
Associate Property Manager

Cornerstone Properties  
126 East 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10022  
Attn: Rodney C. Dimock  
Executive Vice President

Toonen Rental Properties  
830 Liebman Court  
Green Bay, WI 54302  
Attn: Tricia Glodowski  
General Manager

Competitive Telecommunications Association  
c/o Kelley Drye & Warren LLP  
1200 19<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Robert J. Aamoath  
Steven A. Augustino  
Todd D. Daubert

Association for Local Telecommunications  
Services  
888 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006  
Attn: Jonathan M. Askin

Association for Local Telecommunications  
Services  
c/o Willkie Farr & Gallagher  
Suite 600  
1155 21<sup>st</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Attn: Philip L. Verveer  
Gunnar D. Halley

---

Cynthia B. Lindgren