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 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
 445 12th STREET, S.W.
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CITIZENS TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY OF MONTANA AND QWEST CORPORATION SEEK A WAIVER OF THE DEFINITION OF "STUDY AREA" IN PART 36 OF THE COMMISSION'S RULES

PLEADING CYCLE ESTABLISHED

CC Docket No. 96-45

Release Date: January 4, 2001

Comment Date: January 24, 2001

Reply Comment Date: February 5, 2001

On December 22, 2000, Citizens Telecommunications Company of Montana (Citizens) and Qwest Corporation (Qwest) filed a joint petition for waiver of the definition of "study area" as set forth in Part 36 of the Commission's rules. That definition constitutes a rule freezing all study area boundaries. Citizens is acquiring from Qwest 10 telephone exchanges serving approximately 11,800 access lines in Montana and approximately 282 access lines in North Dakota.

By this waiver, Qwest seeks to alter its Montana study area in order to remove the telephone exchanges being transferred to Citizens. Citizens seeks a waiver of the study area freeze to establish a new Montana study area consisting of the telephone exchanges it is acquiring from Qwest. The petitioners submitted letters from the Montana Public Service Commission and the North Dakota Public Service State Commission indicating that they have no objection to the issuance of a study area waiver associated with Citizens' acquisition of the 10 telephone exchanges.

Pursuant to sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.415, 1.419, interested parties may file comments on or before **January 24, 2001**, and reply comments on or before **February 5, 2001**. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) or by filing paper copies. *See Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings*, 63 Fed. Reg. 24,121 (1998). Comments filed through the ECFS can be sent as an electronic file via the Internet to <http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>. Generally, only one copy of an electronic submission must be filed. If multiple docket or rulemaking numbers appear in the caption of this proceeding, however, commenters must transmit one electronic copy of the comments to each docket or rulemaking number referenced in the caption. In completing the transmittal screen, commenters should include their full name, Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit

electronic comments by Internet e-mail. To receive filing instructions for e-mail comments, commenters should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and should include the following words in the body of the message, "get form <your e-mail address.>" A sample form and directions will be sent in reply. Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, commenters must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number. All filings must be sent to the Commission's Secretary, Magalie Roman Salas, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

Parties also must send three paper copies of their filing to Sheryl Todd, Accounting Policy Division, Common Carrier Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, 445 Twelfth Street S.W., Room 5-B540, Washington, D.C. 20554. In addition, commenters must send diskette copies to the Commission's copy contractor, International Transcription Service, Inc., 1231 20th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

Pursuant to section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206, this proceeding will be conducted as a permit-but-disclose proceeding in which *ex parte* communications are permitted subject to disclosure.

For further information, contact Adrian Wright, Accounting Policy Division, Common Carrier Bureau at (202) 418-7400, TTY (202) 418-0484.