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March 14, 2001

Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service,
CC Docket No. 96-45;
Multi-Association Group Plan,
CC Docket Nos. 00-256, 96-45, 98-77, and 98-166**

Dear Ms. Salas:

I am writing on behalf of Western Wireless Corp. ("Western Wireless") to notify you of three *ex parte* meetings: (1) yesterday afternoon, with Kyle Dixon, legal assistant to Chairman Powell, and Laura Newman, legal intern; (2) yesterday afternoon, with Carol Matthey, Deputy Chief, Common Carrier Bureau; Katherine Schroder, Chief, Accounting Policy Division, Common Carrier Bureau; and David Furth, Senior Legal Advisor to the Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; and (3) today, with Commissioner Gloria Tristani and her legal advisors, Adam Krinsky and Sarah Whitesell. Participants in these meetings on behalf of Western Wireless included Gene DeJordy, Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, Western Wireless; Mark Rubin, Director of Federal Affairs, Western Wireless; and my colleague Michele Farquhar and me.

The meetings covered issues discussed in the attached handout, including Western Wireless' progress in obtaining designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier ("ETC") and commencing to provide universal service in a number of states. We also addressed a number of matters pending in CC Docket No. 96-45, including Western Wireless' petitions for designation as an ETC on the Crow Reservation in Montana and on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota; pending petitions for reconsideration of the Twelfth Report and Order in the above-captioned docket; the pending Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued with

Magalie Roman Salas
March 14, 2001
Page 2

the Twelfth Report and Order in the above-captioned docket; and the universal service proposals of the Rural Task Force. We also touched upon the Multi-Association Group plan regarding universal service and access charge reform in rural telephone company service areas. With respect to each of these matters, we discussed issues and arguments set forth in written comments, reply comments, and other pleadings previously filed by Western Wireless (and/or by coalitions in which Western Wireless participates) in the record of these proceedings.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Respectfully submitted,



David L. Sieradzki
Counsel for Western Wireless Corp.

Enclosure

cc: Commissioner Gloria Tristani
Kyle Dixon
Laura Newman
Adam Krinsky
Sarah Whitesell
Carol Matthey
Katherine Schroder
David Furth

**UPDATE ON WESTERN WIRELESS CORPORATION'S
DEPLOYMENT OF
WIRELESS RESIDENTIAL SERVICE**

Western Wireless Corporation has expanded its traditional cellular service offerings to include a competitively priced wireless local loop service with a local calling area several times larger than that currently offered by the incumbent local exchange carrier. These universal service offerings will enable Western Wireless to serve not only the basic telephone needs of rural consumers, but will also enable the company to serve the advanced telecommunications needs of these consumers, including supporting data rates of up to 156 Kbps in many markets by the end of this year. As third generation or "3-G" wireless technology becomes commercially available, data rates of more than 1000 Kbps will be supported.

Western Wireless is currently deploying its new, innovative and competitive Wireless Residential Service (or Basic Universal Service) offerings to rural communities in six states, as detailed below. All of these communities are very rural in nature, almost all with a population of less than 5,000. Some of these communities have as few as 100 residents.

Current deployment of Wireless Residential Service:

Kansas:	5 communities
Minnesota:	42 communities
Nevada:	2 communities (including Reese River and Antelope Valley)
North Dakota:	1 community (Regent)
South Dakota:	1 Native American reservation (including several communities)
Texas:	10 communities

Planned deployment:

Western Wireless plans to roll-out service to more than 100 additional communities during 2001.

Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Designation:

Western Wireless has received designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier or "ETC" for 11 states – California, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming. ETC status will enable Western Wireless to receive federal universal service funding for its customers in high-cost areas in these states, allowing it to compete with incumbent local exchange carriers receiving such funding.