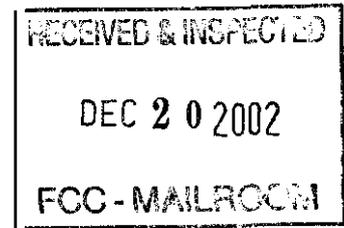


Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554



In the Matter of)
Federal-State Joint Board) CC Pocket No. 96-45
on Universal Service)

ORDER

Adopted: December 18,2002

Released: December 18,2002

By the Deputy Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau:

Revised Filing Date:

Reply Comments Due: January 17,2003

1. On November 5,2002, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) released a **Public Notice** seeking comment on the Recommended Decision of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service regarding issues from the **Ninth Universal Service Report and Order** that were remanded by the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.¹ The **Public Notice**, which was published in the Federal Register on November 29,2002, established comment and reply comment deadlines of 21 and 35 days from publication in the Federal Register, respectively.² On December 12,2002, Verizon telephone companies (Verizon) filed a motion to extend the reply comment deadline from January 3,2003 to January 17, 2003.³

2. We hereby grant Verizon's request for extension of time. It is the policy of the Commission that extensions of time are not routinely granted.⁴ We find, however, that Verizon

¹ *Comment Sought on the Recommended Decision of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Regarding the Non-Rural High-Cost Support Mechanism*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Public Notice, DA 02-2976 (rel. Nove 5,2002); *see Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Recommended Decision, FCC 02J-2 (released Oct. 16,2002)(*Recommended Decision*); *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Ninth Report and Order and Eighteenth Order on Reconsideration, 14 FCC Rcd 20432 (1999), *remanded*, *Qwest Corp. v. FCC*, 258 F.3d 1191 (10th Cir. 2001).

² Thirty five days after Federal Register publication of the **Public Notice** is January 3,2003. 67 Fed Reg 71 121 (Nov. 29,2002).

³ *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, Request for Extension of Time to File Reply Comments (December 12, 2002).

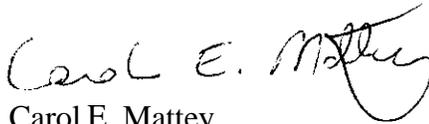
⁴ 47 C.F.R. § 1.46(a)

has shown good cause for **an** extension of the deadline for filing reply comments in this proceeding. Verizon maintains that the period between the filing of comments and reply comments includes the Christmas and New Years' holidays, that many personnel with expertise necessary to address the issues raised in this proceeding will be unavailable during this period, that the **Recommended Decision** raises important and complex issues concerning universal service support that are likely to generate a substantial number of comments from interested parties, and that a two-week extension of time for the filing of reply comments would permit more full and informed responses to these issues and help the parties to develop a better record for the Commission's decision, without prejudicing the interests of any parties.' Accordingly, we grant a limited extension so that parties may file reply comments on **January 17, 2003**.

3. This matter shall continue to be conducted as a permit-but-disclose proceeding in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.⁶ All other requirements discussed in the **Public Notice** remain in effect. For further information please contact Katie King, Jennifer Schneider, or Narda Jones, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau at (202) 418-7400, TTY (202) 418-0484.

4. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to sections 4(i), 4(j), and 5(c) of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 154(j), 155(c), and sections 0.91, 0.291, 1.46 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 0.91, 0.291, 1.46, the request for extension of time filed by Verizon IS GRANTED.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION



Carol E. Matthey
Deputy Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau

⁵ *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. **96-45**, Request for Extension of **Time** to File Reply Comments (December 12, 2002), at 1-2.

⁶ 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206.