

CenturyLink Hyocrisy Criticizes Wireless Data Caps: Deny Their Waiver Request
Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs) are incensed about efforts by CenturyLink to win waivers from the Federal Communications Commission's Connect America rural broadband funding program that could leave WISPs facing new competition from CenturyLink made possible by surcharges paid by phone customers nationwide.

At issue is **a filing from**

CenturyLink (<http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7021978603>) before the FCC that would allow the phone company to "change the rules," according to critics. One of CenturyLink's most prominent arguments is that WISPs have data caps that inconvenience customers. But CenturyLink buries the fact it has usage caps of its own **in a footnote**.

"The waiver application we filed ... would allow CenturyLink to spend tens of millions of dollars to bring more broadband services to more rural and high-cost customers who do not have reasonable access to broadband service today," CenturyLink said in a media release. "These funds would be provided by the FCC's Connect America Fund, as well as additional investment dollars would be provided by CenturyLink. If the waiver application is approved, CenturyLink will build needed broadband services to thousands of homes in Arizona, Colorado, Washington, Oregon and several other states."

CenturyLink claims WISPs charge considerably more for service, suffer from line-of-sight restrictions which could leave many rural customers without service, have limited spectrum which keeps broadband speeds to a bare minimum and often forces customers to endure stringent data usage caps.

The waiver request would allow CenturyLink to receive and use federal Connect America funds to deploy its DSL service to rural customers already served by WISPs if two conditions are met:

- The state where CenturyLink would spend the money has not independently verified the coverage area of the wireless ISP and objective data opens the door to an argument that a WISP cannot adequately service areas where they claim coverage;
- The WISP imposes unusually high prices (\$720/yr or more) or severe usage caps (25GB per month or less).