



BINGHAM COUNTY SHERIFF

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April 22, 2013

FCC 12-167 Federal Communications Commission: Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services

Comment on Proposed Rule Making:

First and foremost, the Bingham County Sheriff's Office believes phone rates for inmate telephone calls should be reasonable and competitively priced. However, we strongly contend that prison telephone service should not be the same as the services offered in the community. Any rule passed to regulate phone call costs must take into consideration the unique nature of corrections, and the important need to balance security needs and family contact. We further believe that the prices that are charged in our facility are both just and reasonable.

Family Contact

We recognize the value of retaining family contact during incarceration. The reduction in recidivism is well-documented by allowing inmates to keep in touch with family and friends. Telephone service privileges are provided in our facility and contact is highly encouraged.

Security Needs

The inmate telephone system we currently operate, offers a powerful investigative component that contributes to a successful intelligence gathering process. This service ensures the safety and security of our correctional facility and staff. Supporting this option is critical for the safety of staff and inmates, as well as for the continued reduction and prosecution of crimes. If we were to lose the ability to pay for such technology because of a cap on telephone rates, it would be extremely detrimental.

Current Contract Services and Costs

The current provider of phone services in our facility was chosen following our competitive bidding rules and public procurement requirements. The calling rates that our inmates' friends and family members are paying were evaluated as part of the procurement process.

Commissions are included in the contract structure. Funds received are used for the well-being of the inmate population. Additionally, they provide support for a number of programs designed to assist the inmates while incarcerated, and upon their eventual release. Any changes to the fee structure would result in reductions in services to inmates, with no offsetting funding available to replace the lost commissions.



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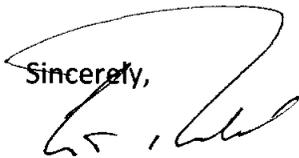
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We request that during the rule-making process, consideration be given to balance the needs of the inmate, families and security in a manner that always factors safety into the equation. Revenue must be sufficient to provide the services required and requested, and deliberation should be given to other services provided as a result of the phone contracts.

Respectfully submitted,

Bingham County Sheriff's Office

Sincerely,


Craig T. Rowland
Sheriff