

Decision No. 45661**ORIGINAL**

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application)
of the SISKIYOU TELEPHONE COMPANY)
for permission to abandon toll)
service and telegraph service at)
Orleans Bar.)

Application No. 31889

Eleanor Hendricks and H. A. Dannenbrink,
For applicant; Siskiyou County Farm Bureau
and California Farm Bureau Federation, by
Edson Abel, interested party; John E. Minney,
interested party; A. B. Campbell, interested
party.

O P I N I O N

Siskiyou Telephone Company, a California corporation and applicant in this proceeding, by the above-entitled application filed November 3, 1950, requests permission to abandon its toll station at Orleans Bar in Humboldt County, together with all existing lines in Humboldt County and all service heretofore offered in Humboldt County. A public hearing on this application was held before Examiner Edwards on April 25, 1951, at Fort Jones, California. Applicant claims that the cost to maintain this service is now prohibitive because the Forest Service has stopped providing maintenance on this line.

Applicant's facilities for rendering telephone and telegraph service in Humboldt County consisted of 9 miles of single-wire line built on Forest Service poles and one telephone toll station. The telephone lines were integrated to a considerable extent with the lines of the Klamath National Forest Service in that pin space was leased from, and maintenance service was furnished by the Forest Service.

In 1930 the Klamath National Forest Service constructed a pole line for its own purpose from the Forks of Salmon to Somes Bar and from Somes Bar an additional 9 miles to Orleans Bar. The Forest Service permitted the company to rent pole space for its toll lines at a cost of 10 cents per pin per year.

In 1948 the territory from Somes Bar to Orleans Bar was removed from the jurisdiction of the Klamath National Forest and placed into the newly formed Six Rivers National Forest. Following the severe winter of 1948-1949, when the toll line from Somes Bar to Orleans Bar was severely damaged, the Six Rivers National Forest determined that it would no longer maintain the telephone line and that, thereafter, the Siskiyou Telephone Company would have to maintain its line. The Forest Service is now using radio as its principal means of communication.

Applicant claims that the line went down in January, 1950, and was not thereafter returned to service. Since January, 1950, the residents in the area have depended upon the United States mail service for ordinary communication and have used the Forest Service radio system in case of emergency. Those persons in the area who desire to use a telephone have been driving to applicant's office at Somes Bar.

Exhibit No. 3 of applicant shows that during the last 13 months the line was in operation, prior to February, 1950, applicant's revenue was \$508.43 and operating expense was \$535.76. A net loss of \$27.33 was shown prior to any allowance for depreciation, material for repairs, accounting expense or return on its investment.

The line was torn down about the middle of September, 1950, by the Forest Service. To replace the old service, applicant estimated that a tree line from Somes Bar to Orleans Bar would cost \$1,752.72 to construct. Also, it estimated that a replacement radio

communication system would cost \$3,000, but because of an intervening mountain, the feasibility of reliable radio communication would be questionable. If a replacement pole line system is required, the estimated cost is \$7,802.

During the past year or two, the Commission received several informal complaints regarding the telephone service at Orleans Bar. Accordingly, all complainants were notified of the hearing and invited to be present or have representatives of the community in attendance. No people from the Orleans Bar area appeared at the hearing. The applicant was questioned regarding a petition presented to us last August requesting that the Commission use its offices in behalf of the people in Orleans, Weitchpec, Martins Ferry and the area adjacent thereto, to have a telephone communication system installed. In reply, applicant testified that it has no certificate to serve in Humboldt County and the toll station was a cooperative measure when the Forest Service installed its lines. It had never investigated the entire area covered by the petition but was not interested in extending its service in Humboldt County as it was not economically justified in going outside of Siskiyou County.

A representative of the California Farm Bureau Federation, who was familiar with the problem of furnishing telephone service in the area, testified that on the basis of a survey made last year, there is not enough business to warrant any individual or public utility installing a telephone system in the communities mentioned in the petition. Since the Pacific Gas and Electric Company installed electric service into the area, single-wire grounded telephone systems will not work properly and the extra cost of a two-wire telephone system makes the request of the petitioners even less feasible from a cost standpoint.

Two residents of the Etna area appeared at the hearing to advise the Commission of trouble they were having with the service of the Siskiyou Telephone Company. Their problem concerned lack of audibility on long distance calls, crosstalk, and slow operator response. While these subscribers realized that their problem was not pertinent to the abandonment proceeding, they did request that the Commission give some attention to this matter. An informal investigation of their problem will be made by the Commission staff. No one appeared at the hearing to protest the proposed abandonment of toll service to Orleans Bar.

From a review of the record, we are of the opinion that applicant should be given permission to abandon toll service and telegraph service at Orleans Bar and in Humboldt County. This service has not been directly available since January, 1950, when the line went down. In the meantime the applicant has indirectly furnished such service to residents of the area by mailing copies of messages, or directly to those who drive over to Somes Bar. The Forest Service is furnishing emergency communication service in the area by radio. Justification has not been shown for requiring the applicant to reconstruct a line that will not sustain itself and be a burden on the rates paid by the other subscribers of the company.

C R D E R

Siskiyou Telephone Company, having applied to this Commission for permission to abandon toll service and telegraph service at Orleans Bar and in Humboldt County, a public hearing having been held, the matter having been submitted, and it appearing to the Commission that it would be uneconomic, as recited in the foregoing opinion, to require applicant to reestablish such service, therefore,

IT IS ORDERED that applicant may abandon its toll station at Orleans Bar and its lines and telephone and telegraph service heretofore rendered in Humboldt County.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that applicant is authorized to file, in quadruplicate, with this Commission after the effective date of this order and on or before July 31, 1951, in conformity with General Order No. 96, the necessary tariff filings to reflect the abandonment of toll and telegraph service at Orleans Bar and in Humboldt County and, after not less than five (5) days' notice to the Commission and the public, to make said tariff filings effective.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty (20) days after the date hereof.

Dated at Los Angeles, California, this 8th day of May, 1951.

G. Z. Ingraham
James J. Caswell
Harold T. Hule
Samuel D. Dutton
John E. Mitchell
Commissioners.