

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Telecommunications Division

RESOLUTION T-15990
January 23, 1997

R E S O L U T I O N

RESOLUTION T-15990. PACIFIC BELL (U-1001). REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF AN INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENT BETWEEN TCI TELEPHONY SERVICES OF CALIFORNIA, INC.(U-5698) AND PACIFIC BELL PURSUANT TO SECTION 252 OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996.

BY ADVICE LETTER NO. 18596, FILED ON NOVEMBER 27, 1996.

SUMMARY

This Resolution approves an Interconnection Agreement between Pacific Bell and TCI Telephony Services of California (TCI-TSCA), a facilities-based carrier, submitted under provisions of Resolution ALJ-168 and GO 96-A. The Agreement becomes effective today and will remain in effect for 3 years.

BACKGROUND

The United States Congress passed and the President signed into law the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Pub. L. No.104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996)) (1996 Act). Among other things, the new law declared that each incumbent local exchange telecommunications carrier has a duty to provide interconnection with the local network for competing local carriers and set forth the general nature and quality of the interconnection that the local exchange carrier must agree to provide.¹ The 1996 Act established an obligation for the incumbent local exchange carriers to enter into good faith negotiations with each competing carrier to set the terms of interconnection. Any interconnection agreement

¹ An incumbent local exchange carrier is defined (in critical part) as one which provided telephone exchange service in a specified area on February 8, 1996, the date of enactment of the 1996 Act. (See §251(h)(1)(A)).

adopted by negotiation must be submitted to the appropriate state commission for approval.

Section 252 of the 1996 Act sets forth our responsibility to review and approve interconnection agreements. On July 17, 1996, we adopted Resolution ALJ-167 which provides interim rules for the implementation of §252. On September 26, 1996, we adopted Resolution ALJ-168 which modified those interim rules. On November 27, 1996, Pacific Bell filed Advice Letter No. 18596 requesting Commission approval of a negotiated interconnection agreement between Pacific Bell and TCI-TSCA.

In ALJ-168 we noted that the 1996 Act requires the Commission to act to approve or reject agreements. We established an approach which uses the advice letter process as the preferred mechanism for consideration of negotiated agreements. Under §252(e), if we fail to approve or reject the agreements within 90 days after the advice letter is filed, then the agreements will be deemed approved.

The Interconnection Agreement sets the terms and charges for interconnection between Pacific Bell and TCI-TSCA (the "parties"). The Agreement provides for the following:

- Transport and termination of local exchange traffic without explicit compensation until one year after permanent number portability is implemented throughout those LATAs in which both parties operate;
- Provisions to jointly provide switched access and to share switched-access revenues;
- Access to network elements, including unbundled local loops and Network Interface Devices;
- Access to poles, conduit and other rights-of-way;
- Provision of emergency services, directory assistance and call completion services;
- Access to White Pages directory listings and customer guide pages;
- Interim number portability until a permanent solution is feasible;
- Dialing parity;
- Resale of Pacific Bell retail services; and
- Physical, shared space, microwave, virtual collocation.

NOTICE/PROTESTS

Pacific states that copies of the Advice Letter and the Interconnection Agreement were mailed to all parties on the Service List of ALJ 168, R.93-04-003/I.93-04-002/R.95-04-043/I.95-04-044. Notice of Advice Letter No. 18596 was published in the Commission Daily Calendar of December 3, 1996. Pursuant to Rule 4.3.2 of ALJ-168, protests shall be limited to the standards for rejection provided in Rule 4.1.4². No protest to this Advice Letter has been received.

DISCUSSION

In November 1993, this Commission adopted a report entitled "Enhancing California's Competitive Strength: A Strategy for Telecommunications Infrastructure" (Infrastructure Report). In that report, the Commission stated its intention to open all telecommunications markets to competition by January 1, 1997. Subsequently, the California Legislature adopted Assembly Bill 3606 (Ch. 1260, Stats. 1994), similarly expressing legislative intent to open telecommunications markets to competition by January 1, 1997. In the Infrastructure Report, the Commission states that "(i)n order to foster a fully competitive local telephone market, the Commission must work with federal officials to provide consumers equal access to alternative providers of service." The 1996 Act provides us with a framework for undertaking such state-federal cooperation.

Based on the 1996 Act, we have instituted Rule 4.3 in Resolution ALJ-168 for approval of agreements reached by negotiation. Rule 4.3.1 provides rules for the content of requests for approval. Consistent with Rule 4.3.1, the request has met the following conditions: 1) Pacific has filed an Advice Letter as provided in General Order 96-A and stated that the Interconnection Agreement is an agreement being filed for approval under Section 252 of the Act. 2) The request contains a copy of the Interconnection Agreement which, by its content, demonstrates that it meets the standards in Rule 2.1.8. 3) The Interconnection Agreement itemizes the charges for interconnection and each service or network element included in the Interconnection Agreement.

Rule 4.3.3. states that the Commission shall reject or approve the agreement based on the standards in Rule 4.1.4. Rule 4.1.4 states that the Commission shall reject an interconnection agreement (or portion thereof) if it finds that:

² See Discussion section for conditions of Rule 4.1.4.

- a. the agreement discriminates against a telecommunications carrier not a party to the agreement; or
- b. the implementation of such agreement is not consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity; or
- c. the agreement violates other requirements of the Commission, including, but not limited to, quality of service standards adopted by the Commission.

The Interconnection Agreement submitted in Advice Letter No. 18596 appears to be consistent with the goal of avoiding discrimination against other telecommunications carriers. We see nothing in the terms of the proposed Agreement that would tend to restrict the access of a third-party carrier to the resources and services of Pacific Bell. Significantly, the 1996 Act ensures that any beneficial provisions in this Agreement will be made available to all other similarly-situated competitors. Section 252(I) of the 1996 Act states:

"A local exchange carrier shall make available any interconnection, service, or network element provided under an agreement approved under this section to which it is a party to any other requesting telecommunications carrier upon the same terms and conditions as those provided in the agreement."

Thus, this Agreement, which does not appear to be discriminatory, is likely to be non-discriminatory as implemented.

There is also no reason to conclude that this Agreement is in any manner inconsistent with the public interest. We have previously concluded that competition in local exchange and exchange access markets is desirable. Because this Agreement will allow another competitor to provide local service in several of the state's largest markets, it is consistent with our goal of promoting competition. We have found no provisions of this Agreement which appears, on the surface, to undermine this goal or to be inconsistent with any other identified public interests. This Agreement does not appear to be inconsistent with the Commission's service quality standards and may exceed those standards in at least one respect. Pacific Bell and TCI-TSCA have agreed to a blocking standard of one half of one percent (.005) during the average busy hour for final trunk groups

carrying jointly-provided switched access traffic between an end office and an access tandem. All other final trunk groups are to be engineered with a blocking standard of one percent (.01). This means that the parties have a goal of completing, on average, no less than 99% of all initiated calls.

We note that this call blocking provision exceeds the service quality reporting level set forth by the Commission in General Order (GO) 133-B, which requires carriers to report quarterly to the Commission as to whether or not their equipment completes 98% of customer-dialed calls on a monthly basis. Although both carriers must continue to comply with this requirement, we are encouraged that they are seeking to achieve an even higher standard of service.

Furthermore, we recognize that no party protested the Advice Letter alleging that it was discriminatory, inconsistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity or in violation of Commission requirements.

Several commenters to previous interconnection agreements sought assurance that the Commission's treatment of those interconnection agreements would not impair their rights and opportunities in other proceedings'. We wish to reiterate such assurances as clearly as possible. This Resolution stands solely for the proposition that TCI-TSCA and Pacific Bell may proceed to interconnect under the terms set forward in their Agreement. We do not adopt any findings in this Resolution that should be carried forth to influence the determination of issues to be resolved elsewhere.

For instance, in Paragraph VI of the agreement, parties state that they "...agree that if the Commission determines that LECs [local exchange carriers] may recover their costs for changes to switch routing software necessitated by the creation, assignment or reassignment or activation of NPA or NXX codes, then the appropriate method of recovering such costs is an explicit all-end-user surcharge." Also, in Paragraph XX the parties state that they "...believe that this Agreement...will satisfy the 'competitive checklist' set forth in Section 271(c)(2) of the [Telecommunications Act of] 1996." This checklist contains criteria with which Pacific Bell must comply before it will be allowed to enter into in-region interlata competition. While the

³A.96-07-035 and A.95-07-045.

quoted statements may reflect the beliefs of the parties, our approval of this agreement does not reflect a determination one way or another as to whether these beliefs are well placed.

If the parties to this Agreement enter into any subsequent agreements affecting interconnection, those agreements must also be submitted for our approval. In addition, the approval of this Agreement is not intended to affect otherwise applicable deadlines. This Agreement and its approval have no binding effect on any other carrier. Nor do we intend to use this Resolution as a vehicle for setting future Commission policy. As a result of being approved, this Agreement does not become a standard against which any or all other agreements will be measured.

With these clarifications in mind, we will approve the proposed Agreement. In order to facilitate rapid introduction of competitive services, we will make this order effective immediately.

FINDINGS

1. Pacific Bell's request for approval of an agreement pursuant to the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 meets the content requirements of Rule 4.3.1 of ALJ-168.
2. The Interconnection Agreement submitted in Pacific Bell's Advice Letter No. 18596 appears to be consistent with the goal of avoiding discrimination against other telecommunications carriers.
3. There is no reason to conclude that the Agreement is in any manner inconsistent with the public interest.
4. The Agreement does not appear to be inconsistent with the Commission's service quality standards and may exceed those standards in at least one respect.

January 23, 1997

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Pursuant to the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, we approve the Interconnection Agreement between Pacific Bell and TCI-TSCA submitted by Advice Letter No. 18596.

2. This Resolution is limited to approval of the above-mentioned Interconnection Agreement and does not bind other parties or serve to alter Commission policy in any of the areas discussed in the Agreement or elsewhere.

3. Pacific Bell Advice Letter No. 18596 and the Interconnection Agreement between Pacific Bell and TCI-TSCA shall be marked to show that they were approved by Resolution T-15990.

This Resolution is effective today.

I hereby certify that this Resolution was adopted by the Public Utilities Commission at its regular meeting on January 23, 1997. The following Commissioners approved it:



WESLEY M. FRANKLIN
Executive Director

P. GREGORY CONLON
President
JESSIE J. KNIGHT, Jr.
HENRY M. DUQUE
JOSIAH L. NEEPER
RICHARD A. BILAS
Commissioners