

Direct Line: 415-765-6228 E-Mail: mschreiber@cwclaw.com

June 28, 2011

Via E-Mail

Mr. John M. Leutza Director – Communications Division California Public Utilities Commission 505 Van Ness Avenue, Third Floor San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Opening Comments of the Small LECs and SureWest Telephone on Draft Resolution T-17321 Revising General Order 153 to reflect revisions to the California LifeLine Program as adopted in Decision 10-11-033

Dear Mr. Leutza:

Pursuant to the Notice of Availability dated June 13, 2011, the Small LECs¹ and SureWest Telephone (U 1015 C) provide these Opening Comments on Draft Resolution T-17321 (the "Draft Resolution"). The Draft Resolution, if adopted, would implement changes to General Order 153 ("Procedures for Administration of the Moore Universal Telephone Service Act"), to implement the new Specific Support Amount ("SSA") method of carrier reimbursement requirements adopted in D. 10-11-033 as well as to make some other administrative changes to the program.

The Small LECs participated in workshops convened by the Communications Division and provided extensive comments on the various proposals considered by the Communications Division. The Small LECs support the Draft Resolution and sincerely appreciate the

¹ The Small LECs are a group of small incumbent local exchange carriers serving rural and remote areas, as follows: Calaveras Telephone Company (U 1001 C), Cal-Ore Telephone Co. (U 1006 C), Ducor Telephone Company (U 1007 C), Foresthill Telephone Co. (U 1009 C), Global Valley Networks (U 1008 C), Happy Valley Telephone Company (U 1010 C), Hornitos Telephone Company (U 1011 C), Kerman Telephone Co. (U 1012 C), Pinnacles Telephone Co. (U 1013 C), The Ponderosa Telephone Co. (U 1014 C), Sierra Telephone Company, Inc. (U 1016 C), The Siskiyou Telephone Company (U 1017), Volcano Telephone Company (U 1019 C), and Winterhaven Telephone Company (U 1021 C).

Mr. Jack Leutza June 28, 2011 Page 2

Commission staff's efforts to implement the SSA mechanism in a smooth and thoughtful manner. However, the Small LECs believe that some specific additional changes should be made to the Draft Resolution, the revised General Order, and the Claim Form to better reflect the requirements of D. 10-11-033.

Specific changes to the revised General Order and the new Claim Form are set forth in the Attachments to this letter. Some of these are non-substantive typographical and formatting changes. Some of the comments recommend language changes to clarify the documents. For example, the Small LECs and SureWest propose some word replacements throughout to better reflect the purpose of the program and its operation. These word changes include replacement of the term "subsidy" with "reimbursement" in the revised General Order and new Claim Form, replacement of the term "Disabled" with "TTY" in the Claim Form, replacement of the words "end user," "subscriber" and "customer" to conform their use in the documents with the definitions in the revised General Order.

With respect to the definitions, the Draft Resolution, on page 3, states that the terms Informal Appeal and Formal Complaint were added. However, definitions for those terms were not included in the revised General Order. Proposed definitions for these terms are set forth on Attachment A. On page 4, the Draft Resolution states that the definition of Local Calls was eliminated; however, there is still a definition for Local Call in Section 2.35 of the Revised General Order. SureWest and the Small LECs believe the definition should be retained. Finally, SureWest and the Small LECs recommend that the definition of "Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier" be revised to cite Section 251(h) of the Telecommunications Act, which established the term. Proposed language is set forth in Attachment A.

Some of the recommendations seek to cure apparent inconsistencies. For example, Section 8.6 of the revised General Order appears to require carriers to show credits for surcharges. However, Public Utilities Code 876(c) and Section 8.1.9 of the revised General Order prohibit surcharges on the rates charged for LifeLine service. As it seems inconsistent to credit an amount that must not be charged in the first place, the Small LECs and SureWest have recommended modifications to Sections 8.1.9 and 8.6 of the revised General Order in Attachment A.

Similarly, Section 2.49 is clarified to reflect that LifeLine discounts, once a customer's application is approved, date back to the application date, which is not necessarily the date that the customer first received telephone service.

Section 4.6 of the revised General Order removed the reference in the current General Order to D.07-07-043, which established the "in language" rules. The Small LECs and SureWest recommend that the reference to D. 07-07-043 be retained for the sake of consistency. Recommended language is included in Section 4.6.2 of Attachment A.

Mr. Jack Leutza June 28, 2011 Page 3

SureWest and the Small LECs recommend that Section 8.1.2.1 of the revised General Order be modified to eliminate the first sentence and change the second sentence to provide that subscribers be offered the option of paying the California LifeLine Service Connection Charge in equal monthly installments with no interest for a period not to exceed 12 months, consistent with the federal Link-up program.

Section 9.3.2 should be modified to state more clearly that LifeLine providers will receive as much as is needed to compensate for the discounts provided, as long as the reimbursement doesn't exceed the SSA. Recommended language is contained in Attachment A.

Section 9.4.10 should be modified to provide for recovery of "any additional administrative costs that do not fall into the categories listed in Section 9.3.13" to ensure that the actual administrative expenses of providing LifeLine services can be claimed. Recommended language is contained in Attachment A.

Finally, the Small LECs seek clarification with respect to those companies who have grandfathered multi-party flat rate LifeLine service customers. For example, Happy Valley Telephone Company has twelve multi-party flat rate LifeLine subscribers grandfathered from its 1997 general rate case order (Res. T-16001, April 23, 1997) at a tariffed rate of \$3.16 per month. Sierra Telephone Company, Inc., has twenty-eight multi-party flat rate LifeLine subscribers grandfathered from its 1997 general rate case order (D. 97-04-032, April 9, 1997) at a tariffed rate of \$3.23 per month. D. 10-11-033 establishes a price floor for flat rate LifeLine service of \$5.00 per month. Accordingly, the Small LECs request that the Draft Resolution expressly authorize companies with grandfathered multi-party flat rate LifeLine service at rates below the price floor to submit compliance advice letter tariff filings to implement rate changes to conform to the price floor established in D. 10-11-033.

Again, the Small LECs and SureWest Telephone appreciate the diligent work of the Commission staff to implement the requirements of D. 10-11-033. Any questions concerning these comments may be directed to the undersigned.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Mark P. Schreiber

Mark P. Schreiber

Attachments

cc: Benjamin Schein Cherrie Conner Service List

659936.1

Attachment A

Specific Proposed Changes to Revised G.O. 153

Deletes are shown as strikeouts. Additions are shown in color.

- 2.1 "Anniversary Date" The Anniversary Date falls on the one-year anniversary of the LifeLine subscriber's Application Date and annually thereafter.
- 2.12 "California LifeLine Service Provider. [A paragraph break is missing between this definition and the definition in Section 2.13 for "Carrier."]
- 2.17 "Customer" [The section number is incorrect.]
- 2.18 "Deadline Date" [The section number is incorrect.]
- 2.XX "Formal Complaint" If an applicant's informal appeal with the Commission's Consumer Affairs Branch is denied and he/she wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she may file a Formal Complaint. For more information about the Consumer Affairs Branch and how to file a formal complaint , please see this link: http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/aboutus/Divisions/CSID/Consumer+Affairs/.
- 2.32 "Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier (ILEC)" The former monopoly provider of local exchange service in a given service area. The definition of ILEC is set forth in Section 251(h) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. ILECs are each required to serve as a COLRs, pursuant to D. 96-10-066, Appendix B, Rule 6.D.1.
- 2.XX "Informal Appeal" When a California LifeLine applicant believes that he or she has been disqualified improperly, the applicant may file a California LifeLine Appeal with the Commission's Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB). For more information about the Consumer Affairs Branch, , please see this link: http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/aboutus/Divisions/CSID/Consumer+Affairs/.
- 2.49 "Service Start Date" The date a new customer begins receiving phone service. The eustomer is billed by the California LifeLine Service Provider from this date. Once the LifeLine Administrator approves the customer's application, The the subscriber receives California LifeLine discounts back to the Service Start Application Date.
- 2.50 "Specific Support Amount" (SSA) A maximum subsidy set reimbursement paid to California LifeLine Service Providers for the monthly recurring charge of California LifeLine service to subscribers. The SSA may be adjusted by the CPUC annually.
- 2.52 "Surcharge" The percentage increment, as determined by the Commission, which is

assessed on an end user's a customer's Intrastate Telecommunications Services by the California LifeLine Service Provider for the purpose of funding California LifeLine.

- 4.1.1 California LifeLine Service Providers shall inform new residential customers calling to establish Basic Service or non-regulated residential service, as applicable, about the availability of California LifeLine, a discount program for customers with a household member currently enrolled in certain public assistance programs or customers with low household income. If customers indicate that they are interested in subscribing to California LifeLine, California LifeLine Service Providers shall contact the California LifeLine Administrator to begin the California LifeLine Application Process for the customer in accordance with Section 4.2 of this General Order and the Timeline for Processing California LifeLine Qualifications (found at http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/Telco/Information+for+providing+service/FormNotices_Public+Program.htm)..
- 4.1.3 In accordance with the Timeline for Processing California LifeLine Qualifications (found at:

http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/Telco/Information+for+providing+service/FormNotices_ Public+Program.htm), California LifeLine Service Providers shall send a confirmation notice to all new customers who desire to enroll in California LifeLine applicants informing them of the arrival of Application Forms from the California LifeLine Administrator and the requirement to return the completed forms with all required documentation. The notice shall also inform California LifeLine applicants that failure to return the forms and eligibility documentation by the Deadline Date will result in the denial of the application for discounted California LifeLine telephone service.

- 4.2.1.2.2 If no, ask the customer about his/her household size and read the corresponding California LifeLine income limits information outlined in section 5.1.4 of this General Order that the applicant must meet in order to qualify for California LifeLine.
- 4.6.2 With the exception of those sales where the applicant, subscriber or California LifeLine Service Provider requested the use of an outside translation service and consistent with D. 07-07-043, any California LifeLine Service Provider that sells California LifeLine in a language other than English shall provide those subscribers to whom it sold California LifeLine in a language other than English with the following:
- 5.4.1.2 If the customer does not have a household member currently enrolled in any of the means-tested programs listed in Section 5.1.5 of this General Order, the customer *must* enroll under the Income-Based Criterion listed in 5.1.4 of this General Order and complete the section of the Application Form entitled "Method 2 Income-Based".
- 5.4.3 [A paragraph break is missing between this section and Section 5.4.4.]
- 5.5.1.2 If the subscriber does not have a household member currently enrolled in any

> of the means-tested programs listed in Section 5.1.5 of this General Order, the subscriber *must* continue his/her California LifeLine enrollment under the Income-Based Criterion listed in 5.1.4 of this General Order and complete the section of the Renewal Form entitled "Method 2 Income-Based".

- 5.5.4 Any subscriber who fails to qualify for continued eligibility in California LifeLine shall be removed from the California LifeLine Program. Upon notification from the California LifeLine Administrator, the California LifeLine Service Provider shall convert the subscriber to Basic Residential a non-LifeLine Service and shall convert the subscriber to a non-California LifeLine service starting effective on with the Denial Date provided by the California LifeLine Administrator. No Service Conversion Charges shall be billed to the customer for this change in service.
- 5.6 California LifeLine subscribers must notify their California LifeLine Service Provider of any change that causes the California LifeLine subscriber to no longer qualify for (i) California LifeLine, or (ii) a second California LifeLine line. Upon receipt of notification, the California LifeLine Service Provider will change the subscriber's California LifeLine service to Basic Residential Telephone shall convert the subscriber to a non-LifeLine Service. No Service Conversion Charges shall be billed to the customer for this change in service.
- 6.2 All California LifeLine Service Providers must notify the California LifeLine Administrator before their initial offering of California LifeLine and arrange the 2-way exchange of its California LifeLine subscriber customer data.
- 6.3 California LifeLine Service Providers shall provide California LifeLine subscriber customer data to the California LifeLine Administrator notwithstanding any tariff, contractual, or legal restrictions on limiting the disclosure of non-published customer information.
- 6.3.1 All California LifeLine Service Providers must provide the California LifeLine Administrator with their California LifeLine subscriber/applicant activities before by the end of the next business day after the in-service service order completion date. of the applicant's or subscriber's service order.
- 6.3.2 All California LifeLine Service Providers must provide the California LifeLine Administrator with all California LifeLine subscriber/applicant activities initiated by the California LifeLine Service Providers before by the end of the next business day from after the time such actions were taken. service order completion date.
- 6.3.3.1 Newly enrolled subscribers customers who are found eligible to participate in California LifeLine during the Application Process.
- 8.1.1.5 [The font size of the words "at regular rates" should be adjusted.]

- 8.1.2.1 California LifeLine Service Providers shall offer California LifeLine customers the option of paying the LifeLine Service Connection Charge in three equal monthly installments with no interest. California LifeLine Service Providers may also shall offer California LifeLine subscribers the option of paying the California LifeLine Service Connection Charge in equal monthly installments with no interest for a period not to exceed 12 months.
- 8.1.9 There shall be no charge or related credits (to California LifeLine subscribers' LifeLine billings) service for surcharges including the following:

California High Cost Fund (CHCF-A) A surcharge, California High Cost Fund (CHCF-B) CHCF-B surcharge, California Teleconnect Fund surcharge (CTF), California Relay Service and Communications Device Fund surcharge (DDTP), LifeLine surcharge (ULTS), California Advanced Services Fund surcharge (CASF), 9-1-1 Tax, CPUC User fee.

These surcharges will apply to any other intrastate telecommunications services purchased by LifeLine subscribers as required by law.

- 8.4 Except as specifically modified by this General Order, all rules, regulations, rates and charnges charges in conjunction with the California LifeLine Service Provider's tariffs or terms and conditions applicable to non-California LifeLine services are also applicable to the service provided under California LifeLine.
- 8.6 No later than January 1, 2012, California LifeLine Service Providers shall specifically show all California LifeLine reductions, or its their equivalent, on the California LifeLine subscriber's bill.
- 8.6.1 If reductions are not shown as separate line items, California LifeLine Service Providers shall provide a revised sample bill format to the Public Advisor that includes a section showing the discounts being provided to the customer by July 2011 September 30, 2011.
- 8.6.2 California LifeLine Service Providers must, at a minimum, delineate the LifeLine reductions show the regular non-LifeLine rate, any Federal Support Credits and any California LifeLine Support Credits on subscriber's bills in a manner discernible by the public.
- 9.2.2 From the effective date of D. 10-11-033 until December 31, 2012, California LifeLine Providers may claim additional subsidy reimbursement to cover higher rates in Extended Area Service territories.

- 9.3.2 Each California LifeLine Service Provider with reported and eligible California LifeLine subscribers will be paid up to the SSA, or the portion of the SSA necessary to reimburse the carrier for discounts provided to LifeLine subscribers, whichever is lower. The SSA will be adjusted on its subscribers' on a per-subscriber basis based on the daily weighted-average customer counts as supplied on a monthly basis by the California LifeLine Administrator.
- 9.3.2.1 [A paragraph break is missing between this section and Section 9.3.2.2.]
- 9.4.10 Administrative costs over and above those allowed under Section 9.3.12 and 9.3.13. California LifeLine Service Providers operating under rate-of-return regulation may seek recovery in their general rate cases any additional administrative costs that do not fall into categories listed in Section 9.3.13 that are not reimbursed through the process outlined in the sections referenced above.
- 10.1 All California LifeLine Service Providers shall assess, collect, and remit the California LifeLine surcharge on revenues from end-user customers Intrastate Telecommunications Services. For carriers required to file tariffs, they must include the requirement to collect the state surcharges in their tariffs.
- 10.5.1 All end-user customer intrastate telecommunications services, whether tariffed or not, are subject to the California LifeLine surcharge, except for the following services:

G.O. 153 Appendix A

8. Access to foreign Numbering Plan Areas unless subscriber has requested Toll Blocking

Attachment B

Specific Proposed Changes to the Claim Form

Page 2:

BASIC SERVICE RECOVERY

33. 1.	Allowable SSA for Flat Rate Service
	1.5 Allowable SSA for Flat Rate Service (Disabled TTY)
3 4. 2.	Allowable SSA for Measured Rate Service
	2.5 Allowable SSA for Measured Rate Service (Disabled TTY)
35. 3.	Connection Charges
	3.5 Connection Charges (Disabled TTY)
36. 4.	Conversion Charges
	4.5 Conversion Charges (Disabled TTY)
37. 5.	Allowable Recovery – Untimed Calls
	5.5 Allowable Recovery – Untimed Calls (Disabled TTY)
38. 6.	FCC End User Surcharges (EUCL)
	6.5 FCC End User Surcharge (EUCL) (Disabled TTY)

*Claimed amounts should be net of the subsidies reimbursement, if any, which the California LifeLine Service Provider expects to receive from the federal Lifeline and Link-up programs.

Send Completed California LifeLine Claim Form to: California LifeLine Team, Communications Division

Page 8:

In table 3, Column I: Amount Billed to LifeLine Subscribers (\$10 x col G)

In table 4, under the "Service Description" heading: (Disabled TTY 2nd)

Attachment C

Table of Authorities

Decision 97-04-032	3
Decision 07-07-043	2
Decision 10-11-033	
Draft Resolution T-17321	passim
Resolution T-16001	3
Public Utilities Code Section 876(c)	2

Attachment D

Subject Index of Proposed Revisions

GENERAL ORDER 153

DEFINITIONS	Section 2
NOTICES, ENROLLMENT AND FORMS	Section 4
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR OBTAINING AND RETAINING CALIFORNIA LIFELINE	Section 5
CALIFORNIA LIFELINE ADMINISTRATOR	Section 6
CALIFORNIA LIFELINE RATES AND CHARGES	Section 8
REPORTS AND CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF CALIFORNIA LIFELINE-RELATED COSTS	Section 9
CALIFORNIA LIFELINE SURCHARGE RATE & SURCHARGE BILLING BASE	Section 10
SERVICE ELEMENTS OF CALIFORNIA LIFELINE	APPENDIX A
CLAIM FORM	APPENDIX D

Attachment E

Service List

Benjamin Schein, <u>bda@cpuc.ca.gov</u> Cherrie Conner, <u>chr@cpuc.ca.gov</u>

aaron.joseph.lewis@gmail.com ajc@cpuc.ca.gov alik.lee@cpuc.ca.gov allnew399@aol.com aml@cpuc.ca.gov amontes@turn.org anitataffrice@earthlink.net anna.kapetanakos@att.com annruth1@aol.com aram@ConnectTo.com art@ucan.org Audrey.Byers@cox.com ayo@cpuc.ca.gov bda@cpuc.ca.gov beth.fujimoto@cingular.com betty.sanders@chartercom.com bez@cpuc.ca.gov bill.Wallace@VerizonWireless.com birdarby@yahoo.com bnusbaum@turn.org brosenb@solixinc.com bstobbe@missionconsulting.com c.henry@siskiyoutelephone.com CAR@cpuc.ca.gov carolina.duckworth@verizon.com cdidden@solixinc.com cdolesh@solixinc.com chabran@cctpg.org charak@nclc.org Charlie.Born@ftr.com chr@cpuc.ca.gov cindy.manheim@cingular.com cmailloux@turn.org crs@cpuc.ca.gov daguirre@telscape.net Danielm@lacuracao.com David.Avila@VirginMobileUSA.com david.discher@att.com DClark@sebastiancorp.com dealexander@att.com deanna@rhainc.com debbieB@stcg.net debbiep@stcg.net deidre.kennicutt@verizon.com denisev@stcg.net deyoung@caltel.org Diedre.kennicutt@verizon.com dmarion@solixinc.com don.eachus@verizon.com douglas.garrett@cox.com dwtcpucdockets@dwt.com ehubbard@rhainc.com enriquea@greenlining.org Eric.McLean@cox.com erodriguez@bluecasa.com esther.northrup@cox.com et1634@att.com

faith.mabuhayalliance@gmail.com fkuo@c-s-d.org fnl@cpuc.ca.gov foliveira@lif.org fua@cpuc.ca.gov gad@cpuc.ca.gov garyb@stcg.net gilbert.deltoro@jitterbug.com gkountz@kermantelephone.com grobinson@globalconnectioninc.com grs@calcable.org HAW@cpuc.ca.gov hcv@cpuc.ca.gov helliott@wavebroadband.com info@communicationsaccess.org jackie.cocoford@verizon.com jacque.lopez@verizon.com jacqueline.kinney@sen.ca.gov james.archer@att.com janewhang@dwt.com jarmstrong@gmssr.com jbellamy@bcoe.org ichicoin@czn.com jclark@gmssr.com jcorralejo@lbcgla.org JDOLGONAS@CENIC.ORG jdonova@solixinc.com jeff@biz-economics.com jeffrey.mondon@att.com jenn.hay@bluecasa.com jesus.g.roman@verizon.com il3@cpuc.ca.gov jmorris@globalconnectioninc.com Joe.Chicoine@ftr.com john.vu@cox.com John_Gutierrez@cable.comcast.com jubuechler@cricketcommunications.com julie@rhainc.com kad@cpuc.ca.gov KAJ@cpuc.ca.gov ken.mceldowney@consumer-action.org kgilbride@dralegal.org khaith@solixinc.com khv@cpuc.ca.gov kristi@cot.net Kristin.L.Jacobson@sprint.com kwerner@dralegal.org kyl@cpuc.ca.gov lencanty@BlackEconomicCouncil.org Igolinker@aol.com lgx@cpuc.ca.gov lindab@stcq.net Imb@wblaw.net lorraine.kocen@verizon.com Iroller@ponderosatel.com mab@cpuc.ca.gov marcie.evans@cox.com marek.gottesman@att.com marg@tobiaslo.com margo.ormiston@verizon.com

mbeach@aarp.org md2713@att.com mel@ducortelco.com MFAHIM@solixinc.com Michael.Bagley1@VerizonWireless.com michael.foreman@att.com michaelanthony@adelphi.net michele.king@cpuc.ca.gov michelle.falkenthal@cox.com milestonecasey@yahoo.com mindyd@ponderosatel.com mkasnitz@dralegal.org mki@cpuc.ca.gov mmattes@nossaman.com mperkin@solixinc.com. mseeger@c-s-d.org mulyatt@rhainc.com mw2494@att.com nc2@cpuc.ca.gov nr1@cpuc.ca.gov nxb@cpuc.ca.gov or10sia@aol.com owein@nclcdc.org pacasciato@gmail.com peter.hayes@att.com philillini@aol.com phillip.cleverly@verizon.com Phyllis.Whitten@ftr.com PJE@cpuc.ca.gov plo@cpuc.ca.gov pshipley@cricketcommunications.com psp@cpuc.ca.gov pucservice@dralegal.org pyc@cpuc.ca.gov rcm@cpuc.ca.gov rcosta@turn.org RegGreco@yahoo.com regulatory@bluecasa.com rgonzalez@sagetelecom.net rickm@volcanotel.com RobertGnaizda@gmail.com rosa.sauer@verizon.com Rose.Cullen@mossadams.com rosepinn@garlic.com rs2@cpuc.ca.gov rsanchez@bluecasa.com rwaelty@ducortelco.com rwh@cpuc.ca.gov selbytelecom@gmail.com sharia@stcq.net Sheila.Romano@frontiercorp.com sjy@cpuc.ca.gov sleeper@manatt.com sneshat@cricketcommunications.com ssarem@roadrunner.com sssmith@ducortelco.com Stefanie.edwards@bluecasa.com Stephanie.Holland@ATT.com stephaniec@greenlining.org stephen.h.kukta@sprint.com

StoverLaw@gmail.com sue@ucan.org suscol@suscol.net suzannetoller@dwt.com Tamim@stcg.net TDP@cpuc.ca.gov telecomlit@arentfox.com thomas.haluskey@ecntel.com thomas.selhorst@att.com tim.reynolds@verizon.com tom@wid.org travis@tctelephone.com TRH@cpuc.ca.gov ults@surewest.com usha.kiran.appidi@one.verizon.com vanderson@rhainc.com venusb@stcg.net vmadrid-salazar@rhainc.com vuk@cpuc.ca.gov wij@cpuc.ca.gov winson8@comcast.net wow@cpuc.ca.gov xsh@cpuc.ca.gov