

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

OF OREGON

ARB 526)1)

In the Matter of)
)
SPRINT COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY) STAFF COMMENTS
L.P. and QWEST CORPORATION,)
)
First Amendment to the Interconnection)
Agreement Submitted for Commission)
Approval Pursuant to Section 252(e) of the)
Telecommunications Act of 1996.)

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE AMENDMENT

On March 9, 2004, Sprint Communications Company L.P. and Qwest Corporation (Qwest) filed the first amendment to the interconnection agreement previously approved by the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (Commission). The parties seek approval of this amendment under Section 252(e) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The Commission provided notice by posting an electronic copy of the agreement on the World Wide Web, at: <http://www.puc.state.or.us/caragmnt/>. The Commission Staff (Staff) offers these comments.

Under the Act, the Commission must approve or reject an agreement reached through voluntary negotiation within 90 days of filing. The Commission may reject an agreement only if it finds that:

- (1) the agreement (or portion thereof) discriminates against a telecommunications carrier not a party to the agreement; or
- (2) the implementation of such agreement or portion thereof is not consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity.

The effective date stated in the amendment is January 1, 2004. Staff also notes that the termination date of the amendment is March 31, 2004. The terms of the amendment will have come and gone before the Commission could approve or disapprove of the filing. Staff cautions Qwest and all companies to file agreements and amendments prior to the stated effective date and well before the termination date. The companies involved in this amendment appear to have been operating under the terms without Commission approval and without filing the amendment. Operating under an agreement that should be filed and approved by the Commission may be discriminatory.

Staff notes that an interconnection agreement or amendment thereto has no effect or force until approved by a state Commission. *See* 47 U.S.C. Sections 252 (a) and (e). Accordingly, Staff points out that the effective date of this filing will be the date the Commission signs an order approving it, and that any provision stating that the parties' agreement is effective prior to that date is not enforceable.

Staff recommends approval of the agreement. However, Staff warns that continued late filings will not be tolerated. Staff concludes that the agreement itself does not appear to discriminate against telecommunications carriers who are not parties to the agreement and does not appear to be inconsistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity.

Dated at Salem, Oregon this 30th day of March, 2004.

Celeste Hari
Telecommunications Analyst