




**OREGON PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
(INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE)**

**DATE:** February 22, 2017   
**TO:** File through Bryan Conway and Bruce Hellebuyck   
**FROM:** Jim Stanage   
**SUBJECT:** Frontier Communications Northwest Inc., Docket No. ADV 474/Advice No. SC16-14, Establishes a Special Contract submitted pursuant to ORS 759.250(5).

**BACKGROUND**

This filing will appear on the Commission's March 7, 2017, public meeting agenda.

Frontier Communications Northwest Inc. (Frontier) proposes to establish a 36-month special contract with a confidential customer for Integrated Services Digital Network Primary Rate Interface Service (ISDN-PRI) and Direct Inward Dialing (DID) services. The contract went into effect on August 29, 2016, and it was filed on December 16, 2016. Frontier has asked staff not to divulge the contract customer's name. Pursuant to ORS 759.250, the Commission has 90 days from the date of filing to terminate the effectiveness of a special contract. For this filing, the end of the 90-day statutory period is March 16, 2017.

Under ORS 759.250, Frontier is allowed to file a special contract up to 90 days after its effective date. For this contract the statutory deadline for filing was November 27, 2016, because the effective date of the contract was August 29, 2016. However, because this contract was filed on December 16, 2016, its filing date *does not* comply with the statute. The company acknowledges that the filing is beyond the 90-day statutory deadline for filing and explains that this was due to an inadvertent administrative error. From my analysis, I conclude that the late filing of the contract did not cause harm to any party.

**Description of Contract**

Frontier proposes to establish a 36-month special contract with a confidential customer for ISDN-PRI and DID. The services are being provided in Oregon under the contract at the following monthly unit rates (compared to the tariffed rates):

	<u>Contract Rate</u>	<u>Tariff Rate</u>	<u>Discount</u>
ISDN-PRI	\$300.00	\$475.00	37%
DID, Block of 20 Numbers	\$3.00	\$5.00	40%

## **Description of Services**

ISDN is a digital architecture that provides an integrated voice/data capability to the customer premises facility, utilizing the public switched network. ISDN-PRI consists of 23 bearer (B)-channels and one data (D)-channel, for a total transmission rate of 1.544 Megabits per second (Mbps). It is designed for transmission through a DS1 facility. Each 64 Kilobits per second (Kbps) B-channel carries user information such as voice calls, circuit-switched data, or video. The D-channel is a 64 Kbps channel that is used to carry the control or signaling information.

Direct Inward Dialing or DID service is a central office service that provides in-dialing from the exchange and toll network directly to the station lines associated with customer premises equipment without intervention from an attendant.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

### **Review Procedures**

Although the form of regulation that applies to Frontier changed August 18, 2014, pursuant to ORS 759.255 and the regulatory plan allowed by the Commission under Order No. 14-290 (UM 1677), its services offered through special contracts remain fully regulated. Thus, Frontier special contracts for its regulated services are still subject to ORS 759.250.

Telecommunications utilities are allowed under ORS 759.250 to enter into special contracts with customers without being subject to standard tariff filing procedures under ORS 759.175. In addition, special contracts are not subject to hearings (ORS 759.180) or suspension (ORS 759.185).

ORS 759.250 outlines the requirements for approval of telecommunications special contracts, which are as follows:

1. The contract service must be a new service with limited availability, respond to a unique customer requirement, or be subject to competition.
2. Prices must exceed the long-run incremental cost of providing the service.
3. Telecommunications utilities are required to file special contracts no later than 90 days following the effective date of the contract. Contracts must not exceed five years, and ORS 759.250 does not permit automatic contract renewals.

4. The Commission shall issue an order on the filed contract within 90 days of the filing. If the Commission does not act within 90 days of the filing, the contract is deemed approved. Staff understands that if a telecommunications utility does not provide sufficient evidence to support the contract under ORS 759.250, staff may recommend that the Commission reject the contract.

### **Classification and Unjust Discrimination Criteria**

PUC Order No. 92-651 (Docket UM 254), issued May 1, 1992, adopted procedures and guidelines for telecommunications special contract filings. The order specifies that in assessing special contracts the Commission must consider the reasonableness of the contract rates and whether the rates result in unjust discrimination. The statutes that underlie these areas of concern are ORS 759.210 (classification of service and rates) and ORS 759.260 (unjust discrimination).

Staff's analysis regarding conformance with ORS 759.210 is twofold. First, staff determines if a special contract rate class is developed by the telecommunications utility for one or more of the following reasons: a) the quantity of the contract service used; b) the purpose for which the contract service is used; c) whether price competition or a service alternative exists; d) the contract service being provided; e) the conditions of contract service; or f) other reasonable considerations. Second, staff determines if the special contract results in revenue sufficient to ensure just and reasonable rates for remaining customers (i.e., a "prudency review").

To determine conformance with ORS 759.260, staff determines if the special contract avoids unjust discrimination and is dependent upon the outcome of the analyses outlined above. The statute does not restrict the Commission from subsequent scrutiny of the reasonableness of special contracts for ratemaking purposes.

The company submitted a financial analysis that shows that the proposed rates cover the company's estimated long-run, incremental cost of service (LRIC) for the contract service(s).

### **Conclusions**

Staff has investigated the filing and finds that it complies with Order No. 92-651 (UM 254), the contracted services are subject to competition, the contract price(s) is above the company's cost of service, and the company would offer the discounted contract price(s) to any similarly situated customer requesting it.