

February 17, 2022

Mailing Address:
PO Box 32, Talent,
OR 97540
Service Address:
9334 Wagner Creek Road,
Talent, OR 97540

Oregon Public Utility Commission
Re: RA1 Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink QC
Docket No. UM 2206

Dear Hearing Panel,

My husband, James Curtis, and I are sixty-seven years of age and have resided at 9334 Wagner Creek Road outside the city limits of Talent, Oregon for nearly twenty-two years. Our initial service was through Qwest, which later became CenturyLink.

I recently retired as a medical transcriptionist, working from home. My husband, Jim, continues to work part-time as a photographer and printer, also from home. Both our jobs require(d) an internet connection for uploading and downloading audio and visual files. Over the years we've experienced marginal service, never having received the speeds we pay for, despite our calls for tech support or requests for billing charges in line with speeds we actually receive.

As well, our landline is through CenturyLink. We have need for a landline because cell service in our area is sketchy and calls are often dropped. At the moment we are in the midst of a major thinning/logging operation in order to prepare for the coming fire season. We have people working with chainsaws and heavy equipment and need a reliable way to call 911 in case of an emergency.

In the past when we have lost service, we have spent an inordinate amount of time on calls with CenturyLink, usually with little resolution, mainly because our calls get dropped after being put on hold while a customer service representative "checks" what the problem might be. When we have to resort to calling about our connectivity problems (when our landline is working), the automated system encourages us to go to their website and "chat" with a bot but how does one go to a website without an internet connection? It's our belief CenturyLink actively discourages customers from reporting outages by forcing us to jump through several hoops to reach a real person, and being put on hold (sometimes for more than half an hour), only to be disconnected with no call back.

On February 7th of this year and during our thinning operation, we lost our landline as well as our internet. Just before we lost internet we were on a "chat" with CenturyLink to alert them to an outage. We knew the outage was not a problem with any equipment at our home because it never is; rather, it's an area outage, which we tried to explain to customer service. However, the service agent insisted she schedule a tech to come out to our house but noted one couldn't get here until Friday, February 11th, nearly five days later.

By Friday morning February 11th, we did have a limping internet connection again but no landline, so I used my cell phone to call CenturyLink and ask when our landline would be back. The service agent told us maybe by the next day, maybe by Monday. She noted it was an area outage they were working on. Through text messages and cell-delivered emails, we got multiple notifications that the tech would

be out Friday and that someone over 18 years of age needed to be present, masked, and practicing social distancing. Friday, came and went. No tech showed or contacted us.

By Monday morning we still had no landline but our internet seemed to be back to its usual sub-standard speeds. On my way to a dentist's appointment that afternoon, I saw a CenturyLink technician working in Talent. I pulled over and told the technician we had not had a landline for over a week now. He said they were wrapping up a repair (the area outage) and thought all customers had service restored. I told him we did not, so he asked for our phone number and said he would give it to his supervisor to check out. Two hours later our landline was back. We now know it's more effective to track down a tech working in our area rather than call customer service. What kind of business plan is that?

On Tuesday there was a power surge (Pacific Power) and our lights flickered off for a few seconds. We began to notice slow loading of websites on our devices and later an inability to stream. We performed download tests, or tried to but there wasn't enough connectivity to perform one. On Wednesday we were able to run tests, which came back showing 0.15 Mbps download and 0 Mbps upload speeds with an Ethernet connection. Today while waiting for the tech (who never arrived or called) tests showed:

Download	Mbps	Upload	Mbps
	0.09		0.66
	0.36		0.53
	0.58		0.76
	1.28		0.66

Today at approximately 3:30 pm our internet service was restored to nearly what we are paying for (1.5 mbps download) though we have never gotten download speeds greater than what we have today, 1.28 mbps. This speed is only for devices plugged into the Ethernet. Our phones and laptops don't get this speed with wifi. It will be interesting to see how much fluctuation in speed we will be experiencing throughout a day and evening.

To illustrate that this is not an isolated incident, it should be noted that in September of 2020, after another loss of service for nearly a week, my husband began communications with CenturyLink's David Copp who explained that the service line we use splits between many customers, and it is our belief our line is oversold, outdated, and needs an upgrade. However, Mr. Copp stated no upgrades were in the works. Frustrated and feeling ripped off, Jim then filed a complaint with the FCC (Ticket No. 4252932) and later received an email from Robert Matthews at CenturyLink who had reviewed the FCC complaint. He was regretful we had any issues and admits "the area is at capacity and customers may experience slow speeds, packet loss and latency during peak hours." He also goes on to claim, erroneously, that their records "indicate the line is currently provisioned at 100% of the 1.5 mbps speed on a very stable line." We were credited \$26.92 on October 20, 2020.

In conclusion I would like to say that not only do we feel we are being robbed of money, we also feel we are being robbed of our time and piece of mind. In the past week we have been stood up by CenturyLink twice after rearranging our schedules to be home when a technician arrives, each time a no-show. We have lost income and experienced extreme frustration. In a heartbeat, if there were an alternative to CenturyLink we would sign up.

But another thing I'd like to say is that each time I was able to talk to a real person at CenturyLink I made sure they understood the angry person they were talking to was not angry at them personally but

at CenturyLink. I also told them I was pretty sure they aren't being paid enough to have to listen to angry customers day in and day out. I believe CenturyLink's practices are toxic to its customers as well as its employees, and at the end of my interactions with a customer service representative I apologize for my tone and encourage them to find other employment for the sake of their own mental health. Surely, having to listen to, lie to, and hang up on angry customers is unhealthful.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to our experiences with CenturyLink.

Sincerely,

Laura (Laurie) Wenzel
James (Jim) Curtis