

OREGON PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION  
(INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE)

RECEIVED

DEC 04 2019

DATE: November 21, 2019

TO: File through Bryan Conway and Bruce Hellebuyck

Public Utility Commission of Oregon  
Administrative Hearings Division

FROM: Scott Shearer

SUBJECT: Frontier Communications Northwest Inc., Docket No. PL 144/Advice  
No. 0767SPL. Increases the monthly rate for the Digital Phone Feature  
Package.

I have reviewed this filing and recommend that an acknowledgement letter be sent. With this filing, Frontier Communications Northwest Inc. (Frontier NW) proposes to increase the monthly rate for the Digital Phone Feature Package. The filing was submitted on November 21, 2019, with an effective date of November 24, 2019.

Applicable Law

Telecommunications utilities are required under ORS 759.175 to submit filings to the Commission whenever they intend to change their rates, terms, or conditions of service. Frontier NW is also regulated under a Price Plan pursuant to ORS 759.255. The Price Plan applies to both Frontier NW and its affiliate, Citizens Telecommunications Company of Oregon (Citizens). The Commission approved the joint Price Plan for Frontier NW and Citizens (collectively, Frontier) with Order No. 18-303 in Docket No. UM 1895.

Section 9.a.ii of Frontier's Price Plan requires price list changes to be filed at least one day prior to the effective date of the change. Section 9.b.i of the Price Plan requires Frontier to provide affected customers with at least 30 days' prior notice of increases to monthly recurring charges. Section 4.q of Frontier's Price Plan requires that any regulated services included in a package or bundle be separately available for purchase and prohibits the price of the package from exceeding the sum of the retail prices of all services included in the package.

Analysis

With this filing, Frontier NW proposes to increase the monthly rate for the Feature Package by \$.50, from \$4.49 to \$4.99. The Feature Package includes 3 Way Calling, \*66 Busy Number Redial, \*69 Call Return, Anonymous Call Block/Rejection, Call Forward No Answer, Selective Call Forward, Selective Call Acceptance, Basic Call forward, Speed Call 8 or 30, Distinctive Ring, Call Forward Busy, Selective Call Rejection, and Priority Call. The Feature Package can be purchased in conjunction with

several of the Company's residential bundled services, including Frontier Digital Phone Essentials, Frontier Digital Phone Unlimited, and Frontier Digital Phone Unlimited Plus.

### Notice Provisions

Frontier states that affected customers were notified on October 17, 2019, meeting the 30 day minimum notification requirement, prior to the effective date. However, On November 20, 2019, the Commission's Consumer Services Section was contacted by a customer questioning the charge and the timing of the increase, as it appeared the price increase happened on November 19, 2019, 5 days ahead of the effective date.

Frontier was contacted about the billing. Frontier determined, due to an internal communication issue, the charge was incorrectly implemented on the November 19, 2019, billing cycle, 5 days in advance of the effective date listed on the filing and 4 days ahead of the required notification to the Commission.

As a result of the error, Frontier charged 990 customers an additional \$.50 before the actual effective date of November 24, 2019. A total of \$495 will be refunded to customers before their next billing cycle.

Even though the charges went in effect early, they still met the 30 day notification window (October 17, 2019 to November 19, 2019 = 33 days) for customers. It is only the Commission one day advanced notice requirement that was not met.

### Price Increase Provisions

Section 1.d of Frontier's Price Plan defines "Packages and Bundles" as "any combination of services, which may include residential or business basic local exchange service as well as other services at a combined price." The Feature Package meets this description. As such, Staff has analyzed the proposed rate increase according to Section 4.q of Frontier's Price Plan (reproduced below).

*Packages and Bundles. Frontier may combine any regulated telecommunications service with any other service(s) to offer Packages and Bundles of services, which may include residential Primary Line Basic Service and EAS, at any price, subject to the below conditions:*

- 1. All regulated telecommunications services offered as part of a package or bundle shall remain separately available for purchase from Frontier's Rate Schedules.*
- 2. The package or bundle price shall not exceed the sum of the stand-alone retail prices of all available services in the package or bundle.*

The \$.50 increase to the feature package requested in this filing, meets these requirements.

Conclusion

Customers were notified at least 30 days in advance, customers who were charged before the effective date are being credited, and the proposed rate increase complies with the pricing restrictions shown in Section 4.q of the Price Plan. The filing now meets the requirements of Frontier's price plan, so an acknowledgment letter should be sent, with an effective date of November 24, 2019.

Frontier.0767SPL.RateIncrease.FeaturePack