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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

OF OREGON

ARB 491

In the Matter of)
)
 METROPOLITAN)
 TELECOMMUNICATIONS OF OREGON,)
 INC., and VERIZON NORTHWEST INC.)
)
 Adopting the Terms of the Interconnection)
 Agreement between SPRINT COMMUNI-)
 CATIONS COMPANY L.P. and VERIZON)
 CALIFORNIA INC. (fka GTE CALIFORNIA)
 INCORPORATED), which was previously)
 approved by the California Public Utilities)
 Commission; Submitted Pursuant to the)
 Telecommunications Act of 1996.)

ORDER

DISPOSITION: AGREEMENT APPROVED

On May 27, 2003, Metropolitan Telecommunications of Oregon, Inc. (Meltel), and Verizon Northwest Inc. (Verizon) filed an interconnection agreement with the Public Utility Commission of Oregon (Commission). The parties seek approval of this agreement under Section 252(e) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

The filing was made pursuant to the conditions placed on the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger. The Federal Communications Commission requires Verizon (formerly GTE) to offer out of state agreements to other telecommunications providers. Because the underlying agreement has not previously been approved by this Commission, we review it pursuant to the standards set forth in Section 252(e)(2)(A) of the Act.

The Commission provided notice of the filing by posting an electronic copy of the agreement on the World Wide Web, at: <http://www.puc.state.or.us/caragmnt/>. Only the Commission Staff (Staff) filed 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 is not consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity.

Staff recommends approval of the agreement. Staff concludes that the agreement 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. Staff notes, however, that page three of the parties' cover letter states:

“MetTel's adoption of the Verizon California Terms shall become effective on March 28, 2003.”

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, 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.

OPINION

The Commission adopts Staff's recommendation and concludes that there is no basis under the Act to reject the agreement. No participant in the proceeding has requested that the agreement be rejected or has presented any reason for rejection. Accordingly, the agreement should be approved.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is no basis for finding that the agreement discriminates against any telecommunications carrier not a party to the agreement.
2. There is no basis for finding that implementation of the agreement are not consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity.
3. The agreement should be approved.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that the agreement between Metropolitan Telecommunications of Oregon, Inc., and Verizon Northwest Inc. is approved.

Made, entered, and effective _____.

John Savage
Director
Utility Program

A party may request rehearing or reconsideration of this order pursuant to ORS 756.561. A request for rehearing or reconsideration must be filed with the Commission within 60 days of the date of service of this order. The request must comply with the requirements in OAR 860-014-0095. A copy of any such request must also be served on each party to the proceeding as provided by OAR 860-013-0070(2). A party may appeal this order to a court pursuant to applicable law.