

ORDER NO. 14 421

ENTERED DEC 04 2014

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
OF OREGON**

UM 1180(9)

In the Matter of

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF
OREGON,

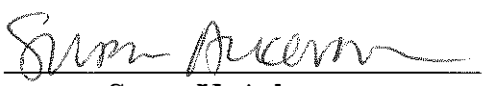
Residential Service Protection Fund (RSPF)
Surcharge Rate Review.

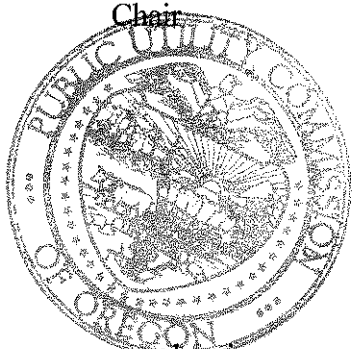
ORDER

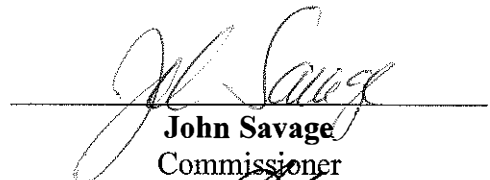
DISPOSITION: STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION ADOPTED

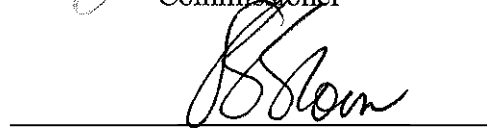
This order memorializes our decision, made and effective at the public meeting on December 3, 2014, to adopt Staff's recommendation in this matter. The Staff Report with the recommendation is attached as Appendix A.

Dated this 4th day of Dec., 2014, at Salem, Oregon.


Susan K. Ackerman
Chair




John Savage
Commissioner


Stephen M. Bloom
Commissioner

A party may request rehearing or reconsideration of this order under 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 860-001-0720. A copy of the request must also be served on each party to the proceedings as provided in OAR 860-001-0180(2). A party may appeal this order by filing a petition for review with the Court of Appeals in compliance with ORS 183.480 through 183.484.

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF OREGON
STAFF REPORT
PUBLIC MEETING DATE: December 3, 2014

REGULAR _____ CONSENT X EFFECTIVE DATE January 1, 2015

DATE: November 24, 2014

TO: Public Utility Commission

FROM: Jon Cray *JC*

THROUGH: Michael Dougherty *MD* and David Poston *DP*

SUBJECT: RESIDENTIAL SERVICE PROTECTION FUND: (Docket No. UM 1180(9))
Surcharge Rate Review and Recommendation for Decrease.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the monthly surcharge for the Residential Service Protection Fund (RSPF) be decreased from the current \$0.11 per subscriber line to \$0.09 per line, effective January 1, 2015.

DISCUSSION:

RSPF staff annually reviews the revenue and expenditures of the previous year and calculates projections for the next year to determine whether the current surcharge rate is sufficient to sustain expenditures and maintain a six-month reserve balance. Chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, §7(1) allows a monthly surcharge to be assessed on each landline or wireless subscriber who has access to the Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service (OTRS) and the rate may not exceed \$0.35. The surcharge provides revenue for three telephone assistance programs: Telecommunication Devices Access Program (TDAP), Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP), also known as Lifeline, and OTRS. By law, the RSPF balance may not exceed six months of projected expenses. The law further requires an annual review of the surcharge rate to determine its sufficiency. Proposed rate changes or reviews are submitted to the Commission for approval.

On December 10, 2013, the Commission adopted Staff's recommendation to decrease the RSPF surcharge from \$0.12 to \$0.11, effective January 1, 2014, to reduce the ending balance to match the six month operating costs (See Order No. 13-462). Despite the reduction, the fund consistently exceeded and will continue to exceed six

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months of projected expenses by approximately two million if the RSPF surcharge remains at \$0.11. In an effort to reduce the ending balance to closely match the estimated six month operating costs, Staff recommends the surcharge rate be reduced by two cents. For instance, the ending balance for June 2015 is estimated to be \$4,477,159 with an estimated six month operating cost of \$2,310,805 as opposed to a \$4,985,634 ending balance if the surcharge rate remained \$0.11.

The recommended surcharge rate of \$0.09 is anticipated to reflect current RSPF operational costs. It is also expected to bring RSPF into gradual compliance with the law while minimizing the potential for volatile changes to the surcharge rate. Staff makes this recommendation because OTAP (Lifeline) and OTRS disbursements are currently declining. However, the expenditures for introducing advanced specialized telecommunications equipment (i.e., tablets) for qualifying TDAP customers will likely increase.

Below is an overview of the surcharge history since the program's inception:

October 1987 – June 1990	\$0.25
July 1990 – June 1993	\$0.15
July 1993 – August 1994	\$0.16
September 1994 – December 1996	\$0.25
January 1997 – December 1997	\$0.13
January 1998 – December 2001	\$0.10
January 2002 – December 2004	\$0.13
January 2005 – December 2005	\$0.10
January 2006 – January 2007	\$0.08
February 2007 – December 2008	\$0.05
January 2009 – December 2009	\$0.09
January 2010 – December 2010	\$0.12
January 2011 – December 2011	\$0.12
January 2012 – December 2013	\$0.12
January 2014 – December 2014	\$0.11

PROPOSED COMMISSION MOTION:

The Commission decrease the RSPF surcharge rate to \$0.09, effective January 1, 2015.

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