

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Request for)	DOCKET NO. UT-980396
Approval of Negotiated Agreement)	
Under the Telecommunications Act of)	
1996 Between)	ORDER APPROVING
)	NEGOTIATED SECOND
ERNEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC.,)	AMENDED AGREEMENT ADDING
)	PROVISIONS FOR UNBUNDLED
and)	NETWORK ELEMENTS
)	PLATFORM PUBLIC ACCESS
QWEST CORPORATION, f/k/a U S)	LINES
WEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC.)	
.....)	

BACKGROUND

1 This matter comes before the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) for approval of a negotiated second amended agreement (Amended Agreement) under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Telecom Act). The Amended Agreement is between Ernest Communications, Inc., (Ernest), and Qwest Corporation (Qwest), f/k/a U S WEST Communications, Inc. The Commission approved an interconnection agreement between the parties on January 31, 1999, and a first amended agreement on July 31, 2000. The Commission ordered that in the event the parties amended their agreement, the amended agreement would be deemed a new agreement under the Telecom Act and must be submitted to the Commission for approval. The parties filed a joint request for approval of a second amendment on September 17, 2001.

MEMORANDUM

2 The Amended Agreement between Ernest and Qwest was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled open public meeting held on October 10, 2001, at its offices in Olympia, Washington. The Commission granted its approval of the Amended Agreement as negotiated and requested by the parties.

FINDINGS OF FACT

3 The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington vested by statute with the authority to regulate the rates, rules, regulations, practices, accounts, securities, and transfer of public service companies, including telecommunications companies.

4 Section 252(e)(1) of the Telecom Act requires parties to a negotiated agreement to submit the agreement to the Commission for approval. Section 252(e)(2)(A) states

that the Commission may only reject an agreement (or any portion thereof) adopted by negotiation if it finds that:

- (i) the agreement (or any portion thereof) discriminates against a telecommunications carrier not a party to the agreement; or
- (ii) the implementation of such agreement or portion is not consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity.

5 Qwest is engaged in the business of furnishing telecommunications services, including, but not limited to, basic local exchange service within the state of Washington.

6 Ernest is authorized to provide telecommunications services to the public in the state of Washington.

7 The Commission approved an interconnection agreement between the parties on January 13, 1999, and a first amended agreement on July 31, 2000. The Commission ordered that in the event the parties amended their agreement, the amended agreement would be deemed a new agreement under the Telecom Act and must be submitted to the Commission for approval.

8 On September 17, 2001, the parties filed with the Commission a joint request for approval of a second amendment to the previously approved interconnection agreement, pursuant to the Telecom Act.

9 Ernest and Qwest voluntarily negotiated the entire amendment.

10 The Amended Agreement does not discriminate against any other telecommunications carrier.

11 The Amended Agreement will facilitate local exchange competition in the state of Washington by enabling Ernest to expand its presence in the local exchange market and increase customer choices for local exchange services.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

12 The Commission has jurisdiction over the subject matter and all parties to this proceeding.

13 The Amended Agreement is consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity.

14 The Amended Agreement meets the requirements of Sections 251 and 252 of the Telecom Act, including Section 252(e).

- 15 The laws and regulations of the State of Washington and Commission orders govern the construction and interpretation of the Amended Agreement. The Amended Agreement is subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission and the courts of Washington state.

O R D E R

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 16 The Amended Agreement between Ernest Communications, Inc., and Qwest Corporation, f/k/a U S WEST Communications, Inc., which the parties filed on September 17, 2001, is approved and effective as of the date of this order.
- 17 In the event that the parties revise, modify, or amend the agreement approved in this order, the revised, modified, or amended agreement will be deemed to be a new negotiated agreement under the Telecom Act and must be submitted to the Commission for approval, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 252(e)(1) and relevant provisions of state law, prior to taking effect.
- 18 The laws and regulations of the State of Washington and Commission orders govern the construction and interpretation of the Amended Agreement. The Amended Agreement is subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission and the courts of Washington state.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 10th day of October, 2001.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MARILYN SHOWALTER, Chairwoman

RICHARD HEMSTAD, Commissioner

PATRICK J. OSHIE, Commissioner