

UT-900726/

October 9, 1990

Utilities and Transportation Commission
Chandler Plaza Building FY-11
1300 South Evergreen Park Dr SW
Olympia, WA 98504

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Commissioners:

This letter contains comments with regards to proposed rules regulating privately-owned telephone and operator services.

I have used privately-owned telephones several times without realizing what they were. The only way I found out about their ownership was when the bill came.

Usually, this involves a credit card call to a local number. When I don't have a quarter, I can use my US West card to make a local call. US West charges 55¢ for this service. Privately-owned companies charge up to \$2.05 for the same service.

In some cases, the owner of the phone is not the same company that services it or bills for it. In one instance, I had to call three companies before I got to the owner.

Also, some owners or billers do not even know from the phone number where the phone is located. Since I use a lot of public phones, I wanted to know which ones to avoid. In one case, I attempted to call the owner of a phone identified on my US West bill. The billing company which answered could not even tell me what city the phone was in, much less where it was located.

I've complained to the UTC's consumer affairs staff and had the charges for some of these calls reversed. But obviously, these companies are going to charge whatever they can get away with.

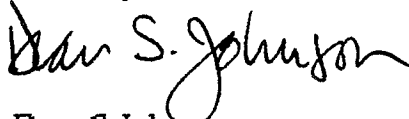
I believe it's high time for the rules you've proposed. In addition, I'd like to propose that privately-owned telephones be required to display large signage at the telephone site which gives the following information:

- the fact that the phone is privately owned;
- the owner and/or servicer, if that's a different company;

- a number to call to complain about rates or ask for a refund.

I fully support your efforts to rein in these people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dean S. Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Dean S. Johnson