

October 11, 1990

Utilities and Transportation Commission  
Chandler Plaza Bldg. Fy-11,  
1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. S.W.  
Olympia, WA 98504

Re: Proposed Rules for Private pay phones

900724

Gentlemen:

I would like to register with the Commission that I am in favor of the proposed rule changes concerning privately-owned pay phone, or alternate operator, charges. This concerns all proposed changes mentioned in the enclosed article from the Seattle Times Oct 10, 1990.

As you will see in the enclosed letter to Paytel Northwest Inc., we have been charged exorbitant amounts for one and two minute calls on pay phones in our area. This situation needs to be changed.

Sincerely,



William J. Clancy  
2958 S.E. 52nd  
Preston, WA 98050

Enclosures

00310

# You can sound off on

If you've been stung by high fees at pay phones or by alternate operator services, this is your chance to speak up to regulators.

For several years consumers have complained that they pay two, three or more times the cost of a usual call at a privately-owned pay phone, or one that is served by an alternate operator.

In some vicinities, these phones are the only show in town, so to speak. So it's not as if the consumer could walk across the street to choose another phone.

From late 1987 through last July, state regulators received 232 complaints about these phone services.

As a result, the state Utilities and Transportation Commission has recommended some rule changes.

The commission wants these phone rates generally to be the same as those charged by AT&T and US West. The commission's proposal also would prohibit hotels, motels and other businesses from charging their customers more than a 25-cent surcharge for a call. Some hotels charge \$1 a call, regardless of whether the consumer is using a credit card for calls. Additionally, the commission would mandate no charge for directory assistance calls.

The commission also would require specific disclosures, such as the toll-free numbers and addresses for alternate operator service companies, and instructions on how to get access to a consumer's preferred phone company at no charge.

Numerous phone companies and alternate operator services have appeared in the marketplace since 1984, when the courts ordered the breakup of the Bell System.

## TROUBLESHOOTER



**SHELBY GILJE**  
Times staff columnist

As a result, consumers aren't always aware of which phone company they are dealing with. At least, not unless they charge the phone call and subsequently see a bill.

You may comment on the proposed rules by writing to the Utilities and Transportation Commission, Chandler Plaza Bldg. FY-11, 1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. S.W., Olympia 98504.

The deadline for comments is Oct. 19.

If you have used a privately-owned phone and an alternate operator service, and have a complaint about charges, contact WUTC's consumer affairs staff at 1-800-562-6150.

If you are traveling, it's wise to ask a hotel before you register about phone surcharges, taxes and other items.