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Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
Olympia, Wa
98504

Attn: Paul Curl

Ref: regulations pertaining to the Alternate Operator Services code.

Dear Mr. Curl:

I have on my desk your docket # U-88-1882-R WAC 480-120-021 which is I think a proposed change to statutory requirements.

I wish to make the following comments.

I have had occasion to use these alternate services - not by choice - for several years, being a business person traveling throughout the Pacific Northwest. I encounter these services in hotels and motels, and also in "pay" phones available to the public. I would vastly prefer that I never encounter them again. I will no longer have to deal with them in hotels and motels, because I have complained about the poor quality of their service and rapacious charges that all the motels I stay in have returned to National services. I am very proud to have done so, particularly at Red Lion and Shiloh Inns. I did this by writing letters and complaining.

I still have to deal with them at phone booths. The most maddening are in downtown Spokane, Ellensburg on Canyon Drive, Longview, Wa by Weyerhaeuser, and Vancouver, Wa by a number of FastStop groceries.

My complaint is that their charges are double or more than other carriers, notably US West, MCI, US Sprint, and AT&T. I object drastically to have those huge unregulated charges being billed to my credit card which is AT&T & US West.

In many instances their systems will not let you get through to a major carrier: in my case, AT&T which I always use on the road because I can get them with one number at any time from anywhere, **except** where some piddling rinky-dink outfit is gouging everyone by overcharging for long distance. Always when I call them they lie to me and tell me that I can dial 10288 or "zero" to get AT&T: however, I never can.

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So I am asking one, that these small companies absolutely be made to allow anyone to directly reach AT&T, MCI, US Sprint, or others by dialing one short number, that works always and has no bottleneck to restrict access by anyone using their switchboard. Two, that they do their own billing for credit card calls, and US West not be forced to do their billing for them.

Alternately, they must charge the same rates as the major companies who have invested millions on equipment, unlike these jerks who sponge off other companies lines and switchgear, while they screw the public.

Three, if two is not enacted, that the billing company not be allowed to enforce lack of payment for the alternate service, and that service must collect directly from the customer. Too often US West must take the anger and frustration of the customer having to deal with those jerks because the customer cant get ahold of the jerks.

Four, the phones be inspected weekly to assure that the systems give the customer these rights, and that who they are and how they can be reached be displayed on the phones, and that in fact the user can contact someone with the company for problems, complaints, etc.

It is obvious to me from sad experience that many of these services deliberately dont let callers get through to ATT or other carriers, so as not to lose that revenue. This is unfair to the consumer.


Five, make it mandatory to display on the phones the name and location of the Utilities Commission to complain about poor service.

Six. review of all complaints of each alternate carrier before renewal of permit.

Seven, permits must be renewed every six months. Renewal fee high enough to may for overcharging of customers.

Thank you for entering my comments on the record. I appreciate your consideration of my point of view, which I'm sure is shared by many other travelers who have been similarly screwed.

Sincerely yours,


Raymond Ruhlen
NWPOWER
PO Box 12128
Seattle, Wa 98102

cc: Consumer and Business, Fair Practices Division, office of Attorney General, state of Washington.