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October 10, 1990

WUTC  
Chandler Plaza Bldg., FY-11  
1300 Evergreen Park Drive SW  
Olympia, WA 98504

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Dear Sir/Madame:

I have read in the Seattle Times that you are considering correcting the unfair pay-phone rate practices.

I drive for the local transit company and am limited to pay-phones located along my route where I can safely park the bus. Although the normal charge for a local credit card call is 55 cents at US West and GTE serviced phones, I have received bills as high as \$4.00 for the same service provided by an alternative company.

It is not always easy to determine which company is providing the service. Some pay-phones do not identify the servicing company(ies). Others may say "US West" or "GTE" on a bold label, but indicate another servicing company on a fine print label.

It is difficult to impossible and extremely time consuming to get rate information from the alternative company operator -- perhaps because they know that if they reveal the rate, the intending caller probably won't make the call.

Because I have been burned by alternative providers, I avoid making credit card calls on pay-phones where there is any reference to a provider other than "US West" or "GTE". Unfortunately, this means that sometimes I must forgo checking in with my family or making other necessary calls if I cannot find a "US West" or "GTE" pay-phone near where I can park my bus.

I would appreciate a standardized rate for credit card calls -- especially local calls. 55 cents is the current US West or GTE rate and seems reasonable.

I have also had problems at pay-phones when the directory is missing or damaged. The phone company insists on charging for directory assistance as well as my intended call. In effect, the phone company makes the customer pay for the phone company's failure to maintain a usable directory at the pay-phone.

Directory assistance should be available at no charge from pay-phones.

Thank you for considering these matters.

Sincerely

  
Douglas R. Syring

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COMMUNICATIONS SECTION  
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