

EXHIBIT 3

DEMONSTRATION OF RISK OF RATE INSTABILITY OR SERVICE INTERRUPTION OR CESSATION

The operating environment in which the Company finds itself has created a climate of great financial uncertainty. The Company has been working over the past several years to address growing competition. The Company has taken steps to increase the availability and attributes of advanced services offered by the Company, including broadband. This has resulted in the Company making additional investments in regulated plant of approximately \$5,600,000 during the period January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2015. As a result, the Company has a substantial debt obligation to cover the investment that has been made.

The overall financial condition of the Company is detailed on other Exhibits to this Petition. What this information demonstrates is that, when adjusted to eliminate the support from the state Universal Communications Services Program that the Company received or accrued in 2015, the Company's total regulated revenue decreased by approximately 6.57% from 2011 through 2015. The Company has looked for ways to lower expenses including reductions in office staff. However, much of the Company's operating expenses are fixed obligations, such as debt-related payments in an approximate amount of \$280,000 annually on its construction debt.

At the same time, the Company is seeing increased competition. For example, the Company has seen some migration of customers "cutting the cord" to move to wireless or other service as their sole method of telecommunications. Since 2011, the Company has lost approximately 1.9% of its total access line count. A loss of customers equates to a loss of revenue without a corresponding reduction in expenses or corresponding increase in rates. This trend of access line loss is exacerbated by the Federal Communications Commission's requirement that the Company increase its rates to remain eligible for full federal USF support. Since 2011, the Company has increased its local exchange service rates in order to be in compliance with the national urban rate floor prescribed by the Federal Communications Commission. However, those increases have tended to discourage customer use of the Company's services, which in turn reduces Company revenues.

During the 2011-2015 time period, the Company has also experienced a decline in the number of special access lines it provides, resulting in a difference of approximately \$30,000 less special access annual revenue received in 2015, in comparison to 2011 special access revenue receipts.

As an example of why state Universal Communications Services Program support is needed, the Company's receipt of revenue from the traditional Washington intrastate universal service access rate element and related pooling fund were terminated effective July 1, 2014. Since then, the loss of revenues derived from the State traditional universal service access rate element has been off-set by revenues received by the Company as a result of its participation in the Program.

PETITION OF WESTERN WAHIAKUM
COUNTY TELEPHONE COMPANY, D/B/A
WAHIAKUM WEST TELEPHONE, TO
RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE STATE
UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES
PROGRAM

Using 2012 as a base line, the Company is facing a loss of State traditional universal service fund revenues of approximately \$143,007 per year if its participation in the Program is not renewed.

As another example, some of the financial uncertainty that the Company faces stems from the USF/ICC Transformation Order issued by the Federal Communications Commission.¹ The USF/ICC Transformation Order has built in an automatic decline in the Company's intrastate and interstate access revenues. The intercarrier compensation ("ICC") portion of the Transformation Order introduces a concept of a base line year for calculating terminating access and reciprocal compensation revenues and provides support from the Connect America Fund ("CAF") based on the base line year. However, the base line year revenues (from which the level of CAF ICC support is derived) are reduced iteratively by five percent each year. The CAF ICC support reduction began in July 2012. Projecting through the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, including 2016 reductions of approximately \$27,382 that occurred beginning July 1, 2016, the Company has seen a reduction in annual support from its most recently revised base line revenue of approximately \$152,100 and of approximately \$251,683 from its original base line revenue.

On top of all this, during the four-year period ended December 31, 2015, the Company has seen its total federal high cost support undergo a significant reduction, declining from \$2,189,682. in 2011 to \$1,915,308 in 2015. Additional uncertainty has been introduced to this source of funding by a recent order of the Federal Communications Commission restructuring support for rate-of-return local exchange carriers.²

These factors, among others, have led to the strained financial condition of the Company as reflected in the financial reports that are part of the Petition.

The combination of factors noted above creates a situation in which, without support from the state Universal Communications Services Program, the Company may be faced with a choice of increasing rates further or reducing service in order to be able to match expenses to revenues. Neither choice presents a viable path for providing continued high quality service to customers. The dilemma presented by these choices reflects the risk of rate instability or service interruption or cessation to which the Company is subject.

¹ *In the Matter of Connect America Fund, A National Broadband Plan for Our Future, Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, High-Cost Universal Service Support, Developing an Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, Lifeline and Link-Up, Universal Service Reform - Mobility Fun*, WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WC Docket No. 05-337, CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, WT Docket No. 10-208, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 11-161 (rel. Nov. 18, 2011)(*USF/ICC Transformation Order*).

² *In the Matter of Connect America Fund, ETC Annual Reports and Certifications, Developing a Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime*, WC Docket No. 10-90, WC Docket No. 14-58, CC Docket No. 01-92, Report and Order, Order and Order on Reconsideration, and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 16-33 (rel. Mar. 30, 2016).