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PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

October 13, 1990

Chair
Utilities and Transportation Commission
Chandler Plaza Bldg. FY-11
1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. SW
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Commission Members,

I would like to encourage you to take action to protect consumers of pay telephone services in this state. I am extremely upset with the numerous new pay telephone services that have been set up for the sole purpose of charging higher rates and forcing customers to use their high priced services rather than providing a consistent, reliable and fair service to the public.

1. I would like a limit placed on the amount of money that a motel/hotel/cafe/store/ can surcharge a customer for use of a telephone. We pay for their services in room rental, groceries, etc. They do not provide the service.

2. Those providing the service should be required to do so at competitive rates with other companies serving the public and which provide most of the line network through which these "pirate" company calls travel. It is ridiculous to allow local monopolies, such as those one finds along the I-5 corridor between Seattle and Bellingham, to charge considerably higher rates.

I am particularly agitated about this problem because my wife must travel frequently to Bellingham in the late evening. We like to stay in touch by telephone as she travels. In the last few years, the cost of this has become prohibitive due to the invasion of these new companies. This makes us less able to afford staying in touch and compromises her feeling of safety. She used to stop and buy snacks and gasoline at establishments enroute from which she made calls. Now she fills her tank and carries snacks to avoid these consumer ripoff traps.

Please exercise your oversight functions to improve these services and their costs. The breakup of the larger systems was intended to improve service and lower costs. Here we have a genuine abuse that needs to be corrected.

Best regards,

David Fluharty

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