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May 15, 2017

VIA E-FILING

Mr. Steven V. King, Executive Director and Secretary
Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
1300 South Evergreen Park Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Re: Docket A-130355 – Changes in Rules in WAC 480-07 – Part III

Dear Mr. King:

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Washington Independent Telecommunications Association (WITA). These comments are submitted in response to the Notice of Opportunity to Submit Written Comments issued March 30, 2017, in the above-referenced docket.

WITA does not have many comments concerning the details of the proposed changes. Rather, WITA has one specific comment on rule language and one global comment that it offers for consideration.

The first of the comments is to address the language changes in proposed WAC 480-07-505(3). This comment comes out of the experience over the past several years that WITA's members have had under the Federal Communications Commission's directive concerning the urban rate floor. While it appears that that initiative is drawing to a close, it was an instructive experience in the sense that WITA's members were able to work with Commission Staff to develop procedures that allowed the companies to move forward on urban rate floor filings, which increased basic service rates, without filing all of the detail for a general rate case. As a result of that experience, WITA suggests that the language in WAC 480-07-505(3)(c) be modified so that it reads as follows:

Submissions for rate changes designed to recover only the costs a company incurs to comply with government actions that directly impact the company's costs to

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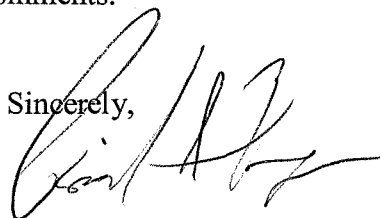
provide regulated service (e.g., changes to state or local taxes or fees) or to comply with federal or state rules concerning the level of rates;

By broadening the exception of the type of filing that will not trigger a general rate case, the Commission would be adopting a rule that comports with the practice that has been developed for urban rate floor filings over the past few years between WITA's members and Commission Staff.

The second comment is on the general structure of the rules. WITA's members are not prepared to go through the detailed requirements for a general rate case filing that are set out in WAC 480-07-510. The level of detail that is set out in that rule is better designed for large electric and natural gas companies, rather than a small telecommunications company. Instead, the requirements similar to those that the Commission has set out for water companies in WAC 480-07-530 would better fit Class B Telecommunications Companies.¹ While Class B Telecommunications Companies have not regularly submitted general rate cases over the past several years and, given the competitive nature of the business they face, cannot be expected to do so on a regular basis in the future, it would be better to match the level of detail in filing requirements that such a company might be expected to be able to meet in case the need arises. The level of detail in WAC 480-07-530 is far more appropriate for the size of company under the definition of Class B Telecommunication Companies than the litany of requirements that are set out in WAC 480-07-510.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



RICHARD A. FINNIGAN

RAF/cs

cc: Client (via e-mail)

¹ WITA's member companies fit the definition of Class B Telecommunications Companies set out in WAC 480-120-021.