

April 2, 2003

VIA E-MAIL & FIRST CLASS MAIL

Carole Washburn
Executive Secretary
Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
1300 S. Evergreen Pk. Dr. S.W.
PO Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Re: ***AT&T Communications of The Pacific Northwest, Inc. v. Verizon Northwest, Inc.***
Docket No: UT-020406

Dear Secretary Washburn:

Enclosed is a recommended customer notice in the above captioned case for the Commission to consider as an alternative to the one presented on March 27, 2003 by the settling parties in this docket. Public Counsel continues to object to the procedural review process which this notice reflects, as well as the substance of the rate increase settlement. Our provision of an alternative draft should in no way be interpreted as acquiescence or agreement to the process the settling parties are promoting.

In addition to the changes we suggest to the notice, Public Counsel believes it is mandatory under WAC 480-120-197 that the notice provide notice of the time, date, and place of any public hearings the Commission may order be held. Further, we recommend that notice be provided by additional means to maximize customer awareness of the settlement proposal. We respectfully request the Commission to order Verizon to provide published notice, consistent with the terms of WAC 480-120-194(2), in addition to notice to individual customers, in order to maximize the actual notice to customers of Verizon's proposed rate increases.

Public Counsel does not concur in the settling parties' proposed notice filed with the Commission last Friday. The proposed customer notice we file today includes revisions we believe are important to inform customers of this settlement proposal in a clear and concise manner. Direct notice to individual customers should be timed so that customers receive notice of public hearings at least 7 days prior to the public hearing(s) established by the Commission, and no later than 30 days prior to public hearings. Further, Public Counsel recommends that notices be printed in no less than 12 point type font.

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Public Counsel believes public hearings should be held as part of a general earnings review/rate case proceeding examining Verizon's operations as a whole. Such public hearings should be held in areas representative of Verizon's local service territory, Snohomish and Chelan Counties, and parts of King County for example.

Sincerely,

ROBERT W. CROMWELL, JR.
Assistant Attorney General
Public Counsel Section
(206) 464-6595

RWC:cjw
Enclosures

cc: Service List (first class mail & e-mail)