

**In the Matter of the Petition of the Qwest Corporation,
et al.**

Docket No. UT-240029 - Vol. I

May 16, 2024



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BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

QWEST CORPORATION; CENTURYTEL)
OF WASHINGTON; CENTURYTEL OF)
INTERISLAND; CENTURYTEL OF) DOCKET NO. UT-240029
COWICHE; AND UNITED TELEPHONE)
COMPANY OF THE NORTHWEST)
)
to be Competitively)
Classified Pursuant to) PAGES 1-31
RCW 80.36.320)

PUBLIC COMMENTS HEARING - VOL. I
(Via Zoom and teleconference)
Chairman David W. Danner Presiding
May 16, 2024

Transcribed by: Sara L. Kern, CET

A P P E A R A N C E S

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In attendance:

Commissioners Ann Rendahl and Milt Doumit

Also present:

Andrew Roberts (UTC Staff)

Melissa Castaneda (UTC Staff)

Tad Robinson O'Neill (Washington Attorney General)

Public speakers (see list: CenturyLink Competitive

Classification Petition, Assignment/Docket Number:

240029, Date: 5/16/2024, Time: 6:00 PM)

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2 May 16, 2024

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4 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Good evening, everyone. Today
5 is Thursday, May 16th, 2024. And this is a public comment
6 hearing on the Washington Utilities and Transportation
7 Commission in Docket UT-240029.

8 I'm Dave Danner. I'm chair of the Commission. And I'm
9 joined by my colleagues Commissioner Ann Rendahl and
10 Commissioner Milt Doumit.

11 And tonight we are having a hearing to take public comment
12 on a petition that was filed by the CenturyLink companies
13 for a competitive classification, specifically on
14 January 8th, 2024, the CenturyLink companies -- and those
15 are Qwest Corporation; CenturyTel of Washington; CenturyTel
16 of Interisland; CenturyTel of Cowiche; and United Telephone
17 Company of the Northwest -- filed with the Washington
18 Utilities and Transportation Commission, a petition for
19 competitive classification pursuant to Revised Code of
20 Washington 80.36.320 and the Washington Administrative Code
21 480-121-061. The company is seeking a competitive
22 classification, and the Commission suspended the effective
23 date of the petition by order on January 25th and initiated
24 this adjudicative proceeding.

25 This is the opportunity for members of the public to make

1 their comments known and made part of the record in this
2 proceeding.

3 We will have a formal evidentiary proceeding on July 9th,
4 2024, with parties who have petitioned formally to
5 intervene. And at this time, that includes the Charter
6 Communications as well as our UTC Staff, which is an
7 independent party, and the Office of Public Counsel and the
8 Attorney General's Office.

9 So without further ado, this is, as I said, an opportunity
10 for members of the public to comment. And so I'm going to
11 turn the meeting over to Andrew Roberts of the UTC Staff,
12 who's going to lay out some ground rules, and then we will
13 proceed with the comment hearing.

14 So, thank you.

15 With that, Andrew Roberts, please proceed.

16 MR. ROBERTS: Actually we're going to go with Mel tonight.
17 This will be her first go at this.

18 CHAIR DANNER: Oh, very good. Okay.

19 Mel, where are you?

20 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: I am right here.

21 Good evening. Welcome to the public comment hearing on
22 CenturyLink Company's petition for competitive
23 classification, UTC-240029.

24 My name is Melissa Castaneda-Kerson. I'm a public
25 involvement representative with the Utilities and

1 Transportation Commission.

2 I will be the moderator for this comment hearing this
3 evening.

4 Before we get started, I would like to cover some
5 background information and virtual meeting ground rules.

6 You will have the opportunity to provide your comments
7 related to this case directly to the Commissioners. The
8 Commissioners act as judges in formal filings like this and
9 cannot answer questions. However, if you do have questions,
10 we suggest you reach out to me or the representatives of
11 Public Counsel after the comments session.

12 All the comments given today will be included in the
13 formal record of this case. If you have not signed up to
14 comment and wish to do so, please put your first and last
15 name into the chat. If you are calling in, please press
16 star 9 to raise your hand, and we will call on you for your
17 name in a few minutes. If you have already provided your
18 name to us, there is no need to provide it again.

19 Please mute your connection unless you are called upon to
20 speak.

21 If you are participating via the Zoom application, you can
22 mute by clicking the microphone icon. A slash will appear
23 across the microphone indicating you have successfully muted
24 your connection. To unmute, click the microphone again; the
25 slash will disappear. Please remember to mute your

1 connection again after you are done speaking.

2 If you called in on the phone, press star 6 on your phone
3 to mute yourself. When you are called on to press -- I'm
4 sorry. When you are called on to speak, press star 6 to
5 unmute yourself. After you are done speaking, please press
6 star 6 to mute yourself again.

7 Please wait to be called on for comment, and do not
8 interrupt other speakers.

9 There are two options to report technical difficulties.
10 You can use the chat feature in Zoom or call Ryan Smith at
11 (360) 664-1165. That's (360) 664-1165. The chat feature
12 should be used to report technical difficulties and to ask
13 to be added to the sign-in sheet.

14 We will not be accepting comments via the Zoom chat
15 feature. Please do not use chat to provide your comments.

16 Closed captioning is available via the tool bar at the
17 bottom of the Zoom application. To access closed
18 captioning, click on the icon labeled "More."

19 If you have questions about the case, please email
20 comments@utc.wa.gov -- that's comments@utc.wa.gov -- or call
21 (888) 333-9882 and ask to speak with Melissa
22 Castaneda-Kerson.

23 You can also reach out to Public Counsel by emailing
24 utility@atg.wa.gov -- that's utility@atg.wa.gov -- or by
25 calling (206) 464-7744. That's (206) 464-7744.

1 If you haven't provided your name yet and you wish to
2 speak, please put your first and last name into the chat if
3 you're using the Zoom application.

4 If you're calling in, please press star 9 to raise your
5 hand, and we'll call on you to provide your name.

6 When we call your phone number, please provide your first
7 and last name and the spelling.

8 After you provide your name, press star 9 again to lower
9 your hand.

10 I will now turn the time over to Chair Danner,
11 Commissioner Rendahl, and Commissioner Doumit.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.

14 And, again, we are continuing to accept written comments.
15 If you know people who are not able to make it tonight, we
16 will be accepting written comments. And you see on the
17 screen, the email for submitting those.

18 And we will now proceed with comments.

19 I have a sign-in sheet, and I will go through that.

20 Let me start first, Senator Short, I see your video is
21 ready.

22 Would you like to start off? Or would you like to -- --
23 would you like to make comments tonight?

24 SENATOR SHORT: Well, I would like to -- I did provide
25 comments in writing and just in summation.

1 So for the record, I'm Senator Shelly Short, Senator for
2 the 7th Legislative District, an area of folks that I
3 represent that are going to be very impacted, potentially,
4 by the decision that CenturyLink is requesting. I think
5 it's very important that the UTC maintain regulatory
6 oversight. And I want to register my opposition to their
7 petition.

8 And, again, I've provided written comments. I want to
9 make sure everybody's got a chance to say what they want.
10 But I just wanted to acknowledge that tonight.

11 Thank you very much.

12 CHAIR DANNER: Evaluate. Thank you very much. And I
13 appreciate your taking the time to speak with us tonight.
14 And we have your written comments in the record already.

15 So thank you so much.

16 Let me now turn to Jed Norris, are you on the line?

17 Jed Norris?

18 All right. We will come back to Jed Norris.

19 Tracy Mccune, are you on the line?

20 MS. MCCUNE: I am on the line.

21 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you.

22 Please go ahead.

23 MS. MCCUNE: Boy, just put me on the spot here.

24 Okay. My name is Tracy Mccune. I am from Lyle,
25 Washington, which is in the Columbia River Gorge. And I

1 grew up in Hood River with the Hood River Telephone Company,
2 which you guys know as United Telephone Company of the
3 Northwest. And I remember it being a switchboard company
4 and that they owned the 386, the 387, and the 354 prefixes,
5 that United Telephone owned that.

6 There was a case date February 28th of 1989 which was
7 United Telephone Company versus the Department of Revenue.

8 And I'd just like to read here on this case what they say
9 about United Telephone -- because United Telephone is
10 actually CenturyLink. They're using United Telephone's -- I
11 think they call it a switch, switched access network or
12 something.

13 Anyway, it says: [As read] United is a public telephone
14 company which main office is in Hood River, Oregon. This is
15 a wholly owned subsidiary of United Telecommunications
16 Incorporated, a large nonregulated and diversified company.
17 United does business in Oregon and Washington.

18 And so my first question is on the CenturyLink paper, it
19 says that CenturyLink currently operates under an alternate
20 form of regulation, a form of limited regulation.

21 So my first comment would be -- I have a question of what
22 is that alternate form of regulation? And when was that
23 decided and why?

24 And then my second comment is that we in the gorge do not
25 have -- in the Washington side, we don't have access to

1 radio because it doesn't come in. We don't have access to
2 any other services besides CenturyLink, which is the main
3 switch -- I think they call it a public switch or a -- I had
4 it written down, but I don't see it -- oh, incumbent local
5 exchange carrier, I think. And that even our emergency
6 management has all of the regulations for any public service
7 stuff is with the Oregon SECC and not Washington because we
8 don't have the terrain or the topography that we could have
9 radio stations or towers on our side except for repeaters.

10 I guess for now, that's all I have to comment. I did
11 submit any comments to you guys, and hopefully you got that.

12 And please reach out to me if you have any further
13 questions.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you.

16 Just to be clear, the public comment hearing is pretty
17 much a one-way proceeding. So we're not engaging with the
18 commenters, and so the fact that you asked some questions, I
19 am not able to respond to you directly. But I would ask
20 Public Counsel to get in touch with you. We have your
21 information on the sign-in sheet, and she can answer your
22 questions about the alternative form of regulation that
23 CenturyLink is currently under.

24 So thank you for your comments.

25 Let me ask if Frank Palmer is on the line.

1 MR. PALMER: Yes, I'm here.

2 CHAIR DANNER: Frank Palmer, yes, go ahead, sir.

3 MR. PALMER: Okay. I am out of town a ways in the
4 mountains. And I have poor cell service, and our only
5 reliable communications is a landline. And I got Verizon to
6 try to set me up with a service for a home security system,
7 and my signal was so poor, well, they couldn't make it work.
8 So I had to use the CenturyLink landline.

9 My neighbors are faced with the same problem. And our
10 only reliable source of communications is a hard line to
11 CenturyLink.

12 And little off the subject, possibly, but I'm afraid -- I
13 mean, if this -- if this works, what's to happen if
14 Verizon -- or Avista decides that, well, we've got
15 alternative sources of -- for electricity too, solar, wind,
16 and maybe they take our power away.

17 So I really hate -- I really hate to see this go through.
18 It would be a horrible inconvenience for a lot of us up here
19 in the hills where the gal talks about in the gorge where
20 service is poor.

21 And that's all I've got.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIR DANNER: Well, thank you.

24 And can I ask. You say you're up in the mountains. Where
25 specifically? Can you tell us what county you're in?

1 MR. PALMER: Stevens County, Washington.

2 CHAIR DANNER: In Stevens County?

3 All right. Thank you very much, sir.

4 All right. Dana Whitfield, are you on the line?

5 Dana Whitfield.

6 All right.

7 Daniel Riley, are you on the line? And do you wish to
8 speak?

9 MR. RILEY: Yes, I am. And my main comment for this
10 meeting is that I have a landline, and I like that landline
11 because it has a number of benefits over other options, such
12 as when you pick the phone up and call 9-1-1, they know
13 where you're at. You don't have to make any effort to have
14 people help -- to help people find where you're at in an
15 emergency. It's a stressful time enough, and your brain's
16 not working well. And there are things that do the better.

17 Also, I hear there's no power in the area. Yet the phone
18 still works; so I don't lose communication. So if you need
19 it for whatever reason, whether that it be, you know,
20 there's a national disaster that's knocked out power or
21 something else.

22 So I understand there's -- a provision was added to create
23 a special class of people who don't have other options. And
24 so I would like to see that class include anybody who's
25 using a landline now, if they could continue to have that

1 available to them.

2 And I suppose, if other people have the same interest in
3 their emergency care as I do, that they would allow people
4 who want a landline to still have one and still have it
5 properly regulated, since I don't understand that there's
6 any other options to landline other than the one that's
7 already wired into my house.

8 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much for
9 comments.

10 Mark Richards, are you on the line?

11 MR. RICHARDS: I am, sir.

12 CHAIR DANNER: So go ahead, sir.

13 MR. RICHARDS: You caught me. Very good.

14 CHAIR DANNER: We do.

15 MR. RICHARDS: I have also -- first of all, I'd like to
16 thank the senator for her comments. Got some weight behind
17 her. That's good news.

18 I also have written comments via email to your esteemed
19 body. And for tonight, I guess I had been thinking about,
20 well, what did I want to add? And for my part, it is the --
21 we have no teeth to bite the ankles of this monster. It's
22 kind of this real soft, if they want to do something, they
23 might when you complain.

24 And I had an instance where I made -- well, and these are
25 informal complaints, of course, in that class, and so I

1 complained regarding their failure in their billing to
2 demonstrate what the basis of their tax counting was, that
3 they would say, oh, this is a percent of this. This is a
4 percent of that or something. Yet you could never figure
5 out what the basis, what was it a percent of.

6 And then finally, today, as an example in my current paper
7 billing, they don't bother giving percentages anymore. They
8 just say, well, this is what it is. Pay it.

9 And when they refer to their website, say, well, there's
10 no information in the website tells how they calculate it.
11 They just say everybody has to pay taxes. You know, and
12 they have some -- they have some numbers and so forth.

13 But it's on the border of malfeasance. You know, and this
14 is of course, my opinion. I am not wealthy enough to take
15 them to court and pursue them. Hopefully the WUTC has
16 something of that ability. Certainly less regulation is a
17 very bad idea. I would much rather see them write it into
18 the dirt. And if we regulate them less, they will seek
19 bankruptcy. I suspect.

20 They are not trustworthy, in my opinion.

21 And that's what about -- that's all I should say for now,
22 I think.

23 Thank you for your time.

24 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you, Mark Richards. I really
25 appreciate you taking time out to talk with us this evening.

1 All right.

2 Let me ask, Wendy Burley, do you wish to make comments
3 this evening?

4 Okay. Jed Norris, are you on the line?

5 Jed Norris.

6 Frank Palmer, are you on the line?

7 I'm sorry. Frank Palmer, we already got you. Excuse me.

8 MR. PALMER: I already was there.

9 CHAIR DANNER: Yeah, sorry about that.

10 MR. PALMER: Okay.

11 CHAIR DANNER: Dana Whitfield.

12 Dana Whitfield, are you on the line?

13 All right. That is everyone I have on the sign-in sheet.

14 Is there anyone else on the call who wishes to make a
15 comment tonight?

16 MALE SPEAKER: We have a Liliane Gervais-Maki in the chat.

17 CHAIR DANNER: All right.

18 Liliane Gervais-Maki, would you like to go ahead?

19 MS. GERVAIS-MAKI: Can you hear me now?

20 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, we can.

21 MS. GERVAIS-MAKI: Oh, thank you.

22 Thank you for giving me the time to express my frustration
23 with CenturyLink. We have been customers for over 40 years.
24 But last year, our landline phone stopped working. That was
25 in August of 2023.

1 I have been in contact with CenturyLink at least twice a
2 month. And since December of 2023 I have been receiving a
3 text from CenturyLink probably once or twice a week,
4 advising me that the technician will be coming to my house.

5 Shortly thereafter, I would say within the same day or the
6 day after, I receive another text telling me that for
7 technical or -- really, I don't exactly know the reasons
8 behind that, the technician was not able to come.

9 And now the appointment is rescheduled for a week later,
10 sometimes two weeks later or a month later.

11 Today, it is still no sign of a technician. And we have
12 been without a landline phone for almost a year. This is
13 very disappointing, and considering that we have a disabled
14 male person in the house who needs to be able to call 9-1-1
15 at any time. I have shared the information with
16 CenturyLink, but nothing has happened.

17 I cannot express the frustration level that we have
18 experienced. And I don't understand what the reasons are
19 behind the lack of support.

20 So thank you for listening to my story.

21 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much.

22 Have you been in touch with either the UTC communications
23 Staff or with Public Counsel?

24 MS. GERVAIS-MAKI: No. I have not.

25 CHAIR DANNER: Okay.

1 I think I would like to connect you -- Andrew Roberts, can
2 you handle it from here?

3 MR. ROBERTS: Yes, I can.

4 Liliane, there is an email address on the screen. Can you
5 see the information on the screen?

6 MS. GERVAIS-MAKI: Yes.

7 MR. ROBERTS: You can email that email address or call
8 that phone number.

9 MS. GERVAIS-MAKI: All right.

10 MR. ROBERTS: And discuss your issues.

11 MS. GERVAIS-MAKI: All right.

12 MR. ROBERTS: With the person on the other end of the
13 phone. And we have a consumer complaint Staff who can open
14 a consumer complaint and work with CenturyLink on your
15 behalf.

16 MS. GERVAIS-MAKI: Thank you for the information. I will
17 use it.

18 MR. ROBERTS: All right. Thank you.

19 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you.

20 Joshua Land, are you on the line?

21 MR. LAND: Yes. Can you hear me okay?

22 CHAIR DANNER: Yes. Go right ahead.

23 MR. LAND: Actually, I've got some concerns too about how
24 will small phone companies that may depend on backhaul in
25 between or have agreements in place, what would the impact

1 be if they change over from their -- to a competitive
2 status? And that was one of the concerns I was wondering
3 about, how that would cascade across those areas, because
4 they may be providing services to local areas but may be
5 impacted if there's a change in where they're -- where, for
6 instance, the regulation or the oversight that wouldn't be
7 there if they changed over to a competitive status.

8 CHAIR DANNER: Okay. Thank you.

9 So your concerns are noted. And we will make that that is
10 part of the discussion going forward.

11 MR. LAND: Thank you.

12 CHAIR DANNER: We will make that part of the record.

13 Thank you.

14 All right.

15 Let me ask going back over the names of people who have
16 signed in but not yet spoken.

17 Jed Norris, are you on the line?

18 All right.

19 Dana Whitfield, are you on the line?

20 COMMISSIONER DOUMIT: Do you see the hand raised on 360732
21 number as well?

22 CHAIR DANNER: I do not.

23 COMMISSIONER DOUMIT: It's (360) 732-4873 has her hand
24 raised.

25 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: That's correct.

1 CHAIR DANNER: For some reason, I don't see that number on
2 my screen. And I've been toggling back and forth.

3 I do see it now. All right.

4 So the person with the hand raised, do you wish to make a
5 comment tonight?

6 MS. SCHROEDER: Yes, very briefly.

7 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, go right ahead.

8 MS. SCHROEDER: I live up in Jefferson County, and our
9 landline is the only way that we currently have internet
10 access. We have the landline and then the modem from
11 CenturyLink, a DHL connection.

12 CHAIR DANNER: Okay. Before you go any further, let me
13 interrupt -- and I'm sorry for doing so.

14 But can I get your name for the record, please.

15 MS. SCHROEDER: Oh, sure. Jan, J-a-n. Schroeder,
16 S-c-h-r-o-e-d-e-r.

17 CHAIR DANNER: Okay. And can you tell me approximately
18 where you live?

19 MS. SCHROEDER: Yes, Jefferson County. Very rural
20 Jefferson County.

21 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Again. Sorry to interrupt.
22 Please proceed.

23 MS. SCHROEDER: Well, that was basically it.

24 We need our landline for internet access, even as minimal
25 and as slow as it is; it's the only way to get it right now.

1 And I would certainly hate for that to go away. I would
2 hope that I could be -- we could be one of the protected
3 customers.

4 But I agree with the other comments, that less regulation
5 is not warranted based on my experiences, which mirror the
6 others of dealing with CenturyLink when things go wrong.

7 So that's it. Thank you.

8 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.

9 And duly noted.

10 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Chair Danner.

11 CHAIR DANNER: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: In the chat, it looks like Beatrice
13 Lackaff wishes to speak as well.

14 CHAIR DANNER: All right.

15 Beatrice Lackaff, are you there?

16 MS. LACKAFF: Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

17 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, we can.

18 MS. LACKAFF: Okay. Hello. Thank you for this
19 opportunity to speak up.

20 I live in Klickitat County in a rural area, different to
21 serve. And CenturyLink provides our landline and all my
22 neighbors'. And many of the neighbors also and ourselves,
23 me and my husband, rely on them for internet as well through
24 a modem via the landline. And we are -- I don't know if
25 they're trying to -- CenturyLink's trying to pretend that

1 they're a competitive provider because they are not. They
2 are the sole provider. And we are dependent -- we have a
3 funny relationship because we're all pretty disgruntled with
4 CenturyLink because of their rates keep going up and the
5 service keeping going down, and they seem to -- we really
6 believe they totally disregard our well-being and because
7 they're not making money, we're not profitable because we're
8 difficult to serve.

9 And then the idea that they would present themselves as
10 a -- as a competitive provider, we are -- me and any
11 neighbors and my husband are all convinced that's just the
12 first step to dropping us like a hot rocks because we're not
13 profitable or -- and/or raising our rates even more
14 exorbitantly than they already are.

15 And it's a ter- -- it's terrifying to consider living
16 rurally today without access to phone service and/or
17 internet service. Just last week, our son had a heart
18 attack, and he was able to call on his landline and get
19 emergency support. And it saved his life, the doctor said.
20 And now he's, thank god, back home. And he can only
21 continue his life living rurally -- which is what he's done
22 all his life and what he wants to do and it works out best
23 for him and for our community for him to be home -- he can
24 only do that if he has access to his landline for plugging
25 in the medic alert.

1 I mean, and then there's people around us who work via
2 their email and get their -- all -- us older people get
3 all -- much or our health care organized through the
4 internet or through phone calls. We live in a wildfire
5 area. We all depend on the phone and on internet for
6 information about wildfires, evacuation routes; safety, how
7 to maintain community safety and build fire safety. It's an
8 absolutely life-saving, essential service that CenturyLink
9 that -- that only reasonable provider of in our area.

10 And believe me, if we had another alternative, I'm sure
11 everyone would be using it because we're all pretty grumpy
12 about CenturyLink's service.

13 But we have no other alternative.

14 So please protect us. If you don't, we are in such a
15 world of hurt, I can't even imagine.

16 So we desperately need you to protect us. And I'm more
17 dramatic than the other speakers. But this is the way I see
18 it, and my neighbors see it this way as well.

19 I just hope you'll hear me. And thank you very much for
20 this opportunity.

21 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much for your
22 comments tonight. And I hope that your son is doing much
23 better.

24 MS. LACKAFF: He is. He is. Thank you.

25 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you.

1 Is there anyone else on the line who wishes to make a
2 comment tonight who has not yet spoken?

3 MS. SHERIDAN: Yes.

4 CHAIR DANNER: Yes.

5 MS. SHERIDAN: Can you hear me?

6 CHAIR DANNER: We can. Can you identify yourself, please.

7 MS. SHERIDAN: Oh, yes. Nora Sheridan, Okanogan County.

8 And I didn't -- I just -- I was listening to everyone, and
9 basically, yeah, the biggest thing here, even here is
10 that -- and I have had -- when we had some fire probably
11 two -- no, actually, 2015, '14, I think it was, I mean, that
12 was great. People had the phones.

13 But, anyway, my problem is that we have such -- well,
14 we've had such hot weather in the last two or three years,
15 and one time my phone wasn't working, and they finally --
16 they put somebody out here, but it was, like -- and I asked
17 them, I said, "Well, is it possible that the original line
18 from my house -- from outside of my house to into the house
19 was maybe shot?"

20 And, oh, no, he found something on my phone.

21 He said, "Oh, here, that's the problem."

22 And also it wasn't the problem, anyway.

23 But he came at night at 7:00 o'clock at night. And my
24 gosh, it was actually the summertime, and I did let him in,
25 but I didn't really notice a lot of -- yeah, that's what I

1 did. He ran to the phone where I showed it to him. And --
2 yeah, I was afraid that -- I'm afraid and the reason I'm on
3 the phone is because -- yeah, it looked to me like they were
4 going to try to get out of their responsibilities.

5 I also -- oh, I just forgot. Well, I also noticed, you
6 know, these changes that me make -- well, their billing is
7 in Louisiana. And then -- well, you know, the -- the place
8 where we send the check is another place.

9 And so, yeah, they're kind of (inaudible) at some point.
10 There.

11 And I don't want to be without a phone for the same reason
12 that everyone else tonight said, that, yeah, if you have an
13 emergency that it gives you the address. You don't have to
14 go around Robbins Barn to figure out where they want to --
15 where we want to come to. And a lot of times, they don't --
16 and I do live by myself. I normally wouldn't tell somebody
17 that.

18 But that's the way it is.

19 And if they're -- if they want to say that just because
20 all -- a good majority has cell phone -- yeah, cell phones,
21 well, I'm not going to go -- I am not going to go with that
22 one. We all have a right to choose what we want as far as
23 communications. So I think that will -- that would be
24 satisfactory if we -- I mean, that's all I needed to say.

25 Thank you.

1 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.
2 Appreciate your comments tonight.

3 All right. Let me ask if there is anyone else on the
4 phone tonight who has not spoken who wishes to make some
5 comments.

6 All right. I am not hearing anyone or seeing anyone raise
7 their hand.

8 So at this point, I think that we are at the end of our
9 comment hearing.

10 Let me then turn to Tad Robinson O'Neill.

11 MS. MCCUNE: Excuse me --

12 CHAIR DANNER: Oh, yes, go ahead.

13 MS. MCCUNE: Yeah, this is Tracy Mccune, and I was just
14 hoping that you may make that continue number and that email
15 address available to those of us that are not on Zoom, that
16 you made available to the previous callers?

17 CHAIR DANNER: Yeah, so, actually, we -- I will give it to
18 you orally, if you have a pen and paper, you can write that
19 down.

20 That you can reach us at comments@utc.wa.gov, and just
21 email that number with your comments or your questions.

22 Or you can call 1-888-333-WUTC and ask to speak with
23 Melissa Castaneda-Kerson.

24 Tracy Mccune, did you get that information?

25 MS. MCCUNE: I did. I did. And thank you.

1 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much for asking for that.
2 I'm happy to provide that information.

3 So I believe, as I said, that that is -- that no one else
4 has their hand up to speak.

5 And so I'm going to ask Public Counsel, Tad Robinson
6 O'Neill.

7 Do we have a deadline for written comments?

8 MR. ROBINSON O'NEILL: Thank you, Chair Danner.

9 So the -- just to -- you had said at the beginning of the
10 hearing, that the --

11 CHAIR DANNER: The evidentiary hearing?

12 MR. ROBINSON O'NEILL: Evidentiary hearing -- excuse me --
13 was on July 9th. I believe it's July 19th. I'm looking at
14 the May 14th amendment to the schedule.

15 So that the hearing is on July 19th.

16 CHAIR DANNER: That's what I have.

17 MR. ROBINSON O'NEILL: And there's a second opportunity
18 for public comment on June 6th of this year, also at
19 6:00 P.M.

20 CHAIR DANNER: That's a second virtual public comment
21 hearing.

22 So for people who couldn't make it tonight, so we will be
23 taking comments on June 6th.

24 MR. ROBINSON O'NEILL: So that Public Counsel would
25 propose that we take written comments up until that

1 July 19th hearing date.

2 And we'll work with UTC Staff to file a public comment
3 exhibit a week after that on the 26th.

4 CHAIR DANNER: All right.

5 Let me ask if that is satisfactory to my colleagues or if
6 any other stakeholders have objections to that date, let me
7 know.

8 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: That is, I think, a good schedule.
9 Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER DOUMIT: No objection here. Thank you, Chair
11 Danner.

12 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Then that's the -- that will be
13 the date, then. We will take comments up through July 19th.

14 It is the responsibility of Public Counsel to gather all
15 of the public comments together into an exhibit that goes
16 into the record in this case.

17 So we want to make sure we're giving them sufficient time
18 to do that.

19 So if there is nothing else to come before the Commission
20 this evening, I will adjourn this hearing.

21 Again, thank you to everyone who provided comments to us
22 tonight. There's another opportunity for others to provide
23 comment on June 16th, and any member of the public can write
24 to us and put comments into the record before -- or up
25 until -- up through July 19th, 2024.

1 So that's it. If there's --

2 MR. RICHARDS: Before you adjourn.

3 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, sir.

4 MR. RICHARDS: This is Mark Richards, once again.

5 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, we hear you, Mr. Richards.

6 MR. RICHARDS: I guess it's kind of like where do we find
7 out what we might expect as things proceed? Is there going
8 to be a record of the discussion between the Public Counsel
9 and the attorneys for CenturyLink that will be transcript?
10 Or what is to be expected, I guess, from these proceedings?

11 CHAIR DANNER: So thank you for the question.

12 So we are in the midst of an adjudication. These comments
13 are made part of the record in that case. But the case
14 itself, the adjudicatory proceeding involves just the formal
15 parties to the case. And those are the Commission Staff who
16 operate as an independent party in our cases; Office of
17 Public Counsel and the Attorney General's Office who
18 represents the interests of the residential and small
19 business customers of CenturyLink; and Charter
20 Communications, who has petitioned to intervene in this
21 case.

22 There will be a full-blown trial. That evidentiary
23 hearing is on July 19th, 2024. And that will be in our
24 hearing rooms at UTC. It'll be hybrid, and our hearings are
25 open to the public.

1 We will, after receiving all of the testimony and
2 listening to all of the oral testimony and
3 cross-examination, the Commissioners will then deliberate,
4 and we will issue an order in due course.

5 And that's -- that order will be a public document, and we
6 will put out a media release at the time to notify the
7 public of what our decision is.

8 So I hope, Mr. Richards, that that helps.

9 MR. RICHARDS: Yes, that is suggestive as to what will
10 occur.

11 Will there be a Zoom for the adjudication proceedings, do
12 we think?

13 CHAIR DANNER: The proceeding, we will have an
14 administrative law judge who proceed [verbatim]. The
15 Commissioners will be on the bench, and as I said, it is a
16 public proceeding. I believe it's a hybrid proceeding,
17 which means that it will have a Zoom or a Microsoft Teams or
18 call-in option.

19 MR. RICHARDS: Okay.

20 CHAIR DANNER: There will be some testimony that is
21 confidential, which we will go into a closed session for.
22 But the majority of it, I believe, will be open to the
23 public.

24 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Very good. Thanks so much.

25 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.

1 MR. ROBINSON O'NEILL: And, Chair Danner, if I may, for
2 those of you that do have questions about procedure, you can
3 also reach out to Public Counsel at utility@atg.wa.gov or by
4 calling (206) 464-7744, and we'll do our best to answer your
5 questions about the process.

6 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much for that, Tad Robinson
7 O'Neill. I appreciate it.

8 All right.

9 Commissioners, anything else before we adjourn?

10 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: No. Thank you all for your
11 comments tonight.

12 COMMISSIONER DOUMIT: No. And thanks, everyone, for your
13 comments.

14 CHAIR DANNER: All right, then -- without further ado.
15 Thank you for all who participated and taking time out of
16 your evening is to share your thoughts with us. And.

17 And with that, we are adjourned. And have a good rest of
18 your evening. Thank you so much.

19 (Conclusion of May 16, 2024, proceedings)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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STATE OF WASHINGTON)
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COUNTY OF KING)

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing recorded statements, hearings and/or interviews were transcribed under my direction as a certified transcriptionist; and that the transcript is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and ability, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially interested in its outcome.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 3rd day of June, 2024.

Sara L. Kern



s/ Sara L. Kern, CET