

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

Docket No. UT-240029 - Vol. II

June 6, 2024



1325 Fourth Avenue, Suite 1840, Seattle, Washington 98101
Bellingham | Everett | Tacoma | Olympia | Yakima | Spokane
Seattle 206.287.9066 Tacoma 253.235.0111 Eastern Washington 509.624.3261

www.buellrealtime.com
email: audio@buellrealtime.com

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

)
QWEST CORPORATION; CENTURYTEL)
OF WASHINGTON; CENTURYTEL OF)
INTERISLAND; CENTURYTEL OF)
COWICHE; AND UNITED TELEPHONE) DOCKET UT-240029
COMPANY OF THE NORTHWEST)
)
to be Competitively)
Classified Pursuant to)
RCW 80.36.320)
) PAGES 32-58
)

PUBLIC COMMENTS HEARING - VOL. II
(Via Zoom and teleconference)
Chairman David W. Danner Presiding
In attendance: Commissioners Ann Rendahl and Milt Doumit
June 6, 2024

Transcribed by: Sara L. Kern, CET

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2 June 6, 2024
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4 CHAIR DANNER: Today is June 6th, 2024. And this is a
5 public comment hearing of the Utilities and Transportation
6 Commission in Docket UT-240029. And that is a petition for
7 competitive classification by the CenturyLink companies.
8 And this is the second of two public comment hearings in
9 this docket.

10 On January 8th, 2024, the CenturyLink Companies -- and
11 those include Qwest Corporation, CenturyTel of Washington,
12 CenturyTel of Interisland, CenturyTel of Cowiche, and United
13 Telephone Company of the Northwest, collectively referred to
14 as "CenturyLink" or the "Company" -- filed with the
15 Utilities and Transportation Commission a petition for
16 competitive classification pursuant to the Revised Code of
17 Washington, RCW 80.36.320, and the Washington Administrative
18 Code, WAC 480-121-061.

19 And on February 5th, the Commission issued an order
20 establishing a procedural schedule, and that includes the
21 virtual comment hearings that we have tonight and that we
22 had earlier on May 16th.

23 The Commission holds these hearings to provide members of
24 the public with an opportunity to present oral comments to
25 the Commission on issues raised in this docket. There will

A P P E A R A N C E S

1
2
3 Also present:

4 Melissa Castaneda (UTC Staff)
5 Tad Robinson O'Neill (Washington Attorney General)
6 Public speakers (see list: CenturyLink Competitive
7 Classification Petition, Assignment/Docket Number:
8 240029, Date: 6/6/2024, Time: 6:00 PM)
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1 also be opportunities for members of the public to submit
2 written comments. And we will talk about that in a moment.

3 I am going to turn the -- unless -- I'm joined by -- I'm
4 Dave Danner. I'm chair of the Commission. I'm joined by my
5 colleagues Ann Rendahl -- Commissioner Ann Rendahl and
6 Commissioner Milt Doumit. And unless my colleagues have
7 anything that they would like to say before we get started,
8 I'm going to turn it over to Melissa Castaneda-Kerson from
9 our UTC Staff, who is going to basically set forth the
10 ground rules this evening.

11 Mel, are you there?

12 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: Yes, I am.

13 CHAIR DANNER: Go right ahead.

14 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: Thank you, Chair Danner. Thank
15 you.

16 Good evening and welcome to the public comment hearing on
17 CenturyLink Companies' petition for a competitive
18 classification, TC-240029 [sic].

19 My name is Melissa Castaneda-Kerson. I'm public a
20 involvement representative with the Utilities and
21 Transportation Commission. I will be the moderator for this
22 comment hearing this evening.

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

25 You have the opportunity to provide your comments related

1 to this case directly to the Commissioners. The
2 Commissioners act as judges in formal filings like this and
3 cannot answer questions.

4 However, if you do have questions, we suggest you reach
5 out to me or the representative of Public Counsel after the
6 comment session. All of the comments given today will be
7 included in the formal record of this case. If you have not
8 signed up to comment and wish to do so, please press --
9 please put your first and last name into the chat.

10 If you are calling in, please press star 9 to raise your
11 hand, and we will call on you for your name in a few
12 minutes.

13 If you have already provided your name to us, there is no
14 need to provide it again.

15 Now, for some meeting logistics. Please mute your
16 connection unless you are called upon to speak. If you are
17 participating via the Zoom application, you can mute by
18 clicking the microphone icon. A slash will appear across
19 the microphone indicating you have successfully muted your
20 connection. To unmute, click the microphone again; the
21 slash will disappear. Please remember to mute your
22 connection again after you are done speaking.

23 If you called in on the phone, press star 6 on your phone
24 to mute yourself. When are you called on to speak, press
25 star 6 to unmute yourself. After you are done speaking,

1 last name with the spelling, and after you provide your
2 name, please press star 9 again to lower your hand.

3 I will now turn the time over to Chair Danner,
4 Commissioner Rendahl, Commissioner Doumit.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much, Mel.

7 I just want to make -- for clarification, I think that the
8 opening slide said that the docket number was TC-240029. I
9 just want to clarify that it is UT-240029.

10 So with that clarification, we will get started.

11 And I hope that we will later in the evening post the
12 numbers to call and the addresses for submitting written
13 comments, and we will get to that in due course.

14 So with that, let me start -- we do have a sign-in sheet.

15 Let me ask if Miriam Goldfarb is on the line and wishes to
16 speak to us tonight?

17 MS. GOLDFARB: Yes. Can you hear me?

18 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, we can. A little low.

19 MS. GOLDFARB: Okay.

20 CHAIR DANNER: But if you speak up, we can hear you.

21 MS. GOLDFARB: Okay. Hopefully, you can hear me now.

22 CHAIR DANNER: Yes.

23 MS. GOLDFARB: We live in the -- so my name is Miriam
24 Goldfarb. We live in the Gig Harbor area in Pierce County.
25 We have copper wire telephone service through CenturyLink.

1 please press star 6 to mute yourself again.

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

4 There are two options to report technical difficulties.

5 You can use the chat feature in the Zoom, or you can call
6 Ryan Smith at (360) 664-1165. That's (360) 664-1165.

7 The chat feature should be used to report technical
8 difficulties and to ask to be added to the sign-in sheet.

9 We will not be accepting comments via the Zoom chat feature.

10 Please do not use the chat to provide your comments.

11 Closed captioning is available the tool bar at the bottom
12 of the Zoom application.

13 If you have questions about the case, please email
14 comments@utc.wa.gov. That's comments@utc.wa.gov. Or call
15 (888) 333-9882. That's (888) 333-9982 and ask to speak with
16 Melissa Castaneda-Kerson.

17 You can also reach out to Public Counsel by emailing
18 utility@atg.wa.gov. That's utility@atg.wa.gov. Or calling
19 (206) 464-7744. That's (206) 464-7744.

20 If you haven't provided your name yet and you wish to
21 speak, please put your first and last name into the chat if
22 you are using the Zoom application.

23 If you are calling in, please press star 9 to raise your
24 hand, and we will call on you to provide your name. When we
25 call your phone number, please provide your first and your

1 In the recent past, I've provided comments for these
2 hearings regarding our experience with poor customer service
3 and lack of telephone service with CenturyLink.

4 I'm adding comments today regarding CenturyLink's lack of
5 detailed telephone plan information and pricing transparency
6 for their copper wire telephone plans. When I have
7 requested detailed written information from CenturyLink
8 regarding their copper wire telephone plans, I have been
9 told that they do not have any written information to mail
10 to me. I have been told to look at their website for this
11 information. When I have looked at their website, they do
12 not list any of their copper wire telephone plans on their
13 website.

14 For the past several years, CenturyLink has increased
15 their prices very frequently. In order for a customer to
16 make informed, correct decisions about changing the
17 telephone plan, a customer should be given in writing
18 complete and accurate information about all available copper
19 wire plans in their area. Some customers are in
20 grandfathered plans. Once one switches out of the
21 grandfathered plan, the customer cannot return back to the
22 previous plan. The customer should be given written
23 detailed information about the copper wire telephone plans
24 in their area. That information should include all services
25 in each plan, along with detailed pricing, fees, and taxes.

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<p>1 Thank you very much.</p> <p>2 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much for your</p> <p>3 comments.</p> <p>4 And let me know turn to Joseph Medeiros.</p> <p>5 Are you there?</p> <p>6 MR. MEDEIROS: Yes, I am, sir.</p> <p>7 CHAIR DANNER: Yes. Go ahead, sir.</p> <p>8 MR. MEDEIROS: Okay. Much like what the lady just spoke</p> <p>9 about, I live in rural east Pierce County, between South</p> <p>10 Prairie and Orting, in a small community. We have been</p> <p>11 working -- or trying to work with CenturyLink for years to</p> <p>12 correct the problems.</p> <p>13 Back in 2021, we realized that the copper network was not</p> <p>14 sustainable. They -- the parts and system here are old, and</p> <p>15 there are no replacements. We worked with CenturyLink on a</p> <p>16 study to replace the copper with fiberoptic cable. This</p> <p>17 study was conducted entirely by CenturyLink and their</p> <p>18 personnel and their technical people, who were great. They</p> <p>19 came up with a price of \$265,000.</p> <p>20 We then obtained a grant from the state of Washington to</p> <p>21 replace the wiring.</p> <p>22 At the last minute, CenturyLink backed out.</p> <p>23 Now, when I converse with technical people that I see</p> <p>24 working the lines -- we are a low-revenue area. And this is</p> <p>25 borne out by -- also by the state of Washington's chart. We</p>	<p>1 to CenturyLink. There's a monopoly. And we can't do</p> <p>2 anything about it."</p> <p>3 So, again, we are doomed. We can't -- if CenturyLink</p> <p>4 doesn't work, we can't go anywhere else. There is nowhere</p> <p>5 to turn.</p> <p>6 And whatever they're trying to do now, I suspect their</p> <p>7 motivation. It's just not right. How can -- how can they</p> <p>8 be allowed to discriminate on who gets what service in what</p> <p>9 area? Puget Sound Energy doesn't discriminate. I get the</p> <p>10 same electrical service in our area that people get in</p> <p>11 Bonnie Lake, get in Orting, anywhere else.</p> <p>12 But not CenturyLink. And they shouldn't be allowed to</p> <p>13 discriminate regarding their services.</p> <p>14 So thank you very much for allowing me to speak. Thank</p> <p>15 you again.</p> <p>16 CHAIR DANNER: I appreciate your taking time to meet with</p> <p>17 us tonight and share your thoughts. Thank you.</p> <p>18 Nora Sheridan, are you there?</p> <p>19 Nora Sheridan?</p> <p>20 All right. Norma Fried, are you there?</p> <p>21 All right. Dorn Campbell, are you there?</p> <p>22 Kate Richardson, are you here?</p> <p>23 KATE RICHARDSON: Yes. Yes.</p> <p>24 CHAIR DANNER: All right.</p> <p>25 Go ahead.</p>
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<p>1 are a low-revenue area, and so they're not going to put any</p> <p>2 more effort into our area.</p> <p>3 So somebody higher up must have saw what was happening and</p> <p>4 changed the plan, canceled that. So now we continue to with</p> <p>5 a low-revenue area.</p> <p>6 When the phone system goes down, which it has -- okay? --</p> <p>7 as early as January and February of this year, when it goes</p> <p>8 down, it's not down for hours. It's not for days. It's</p> <p>9 down for weeks. This is extremely hard.</p> <p>10 When other utilities go down, like, Puget Sound Energy, at</p> <p>11 least you can have a battery backup.</p> <p>12 With CenturyLink, there is no backup. You are stuck. Our</p> <p>13 security, we have to manually walk through the security</p> <p>14 system.</p> <p>15 And, again, in this whole process, when I talked to the</p> <p>16 technical people onsite, working the lines, their answer to</p> <p>17 me is -- when I asked them about the -- getting that</p> <p>18 fiberoptic back in, they told me, no way. We're low</p> <p>19 revenue. The solution that they offered me was for me to</p> <p>20 move.</p> <p>21 I am not going to move. Okay?</p> <p>22 When this -- when they backed out on the remedying the</p> <p>23 problem, I contacted Comcast, which Comcast operates in</p> <p>24 Orting, two miles away. And I was told by Comcast, they</p> <p>25 said, "Joe, sorry. We cannot help you. You, quote, belong</p>	<p>1 KATE RICHARDSON: I'm Kate Richardson, a 76-year-old</p> <p>2 living alone in Burien. I've had an uneven relationship</p> <p>3 with CenturyLink since it took over from Qwest. Currently I</p> <p>4 am on a, quote, price for life, unquote, program. Any</p> <p>5 change will raise the monthly by at least \$25, though I have</p> <p>6 nothing in writing spelling out any conditions. I get a</p> <p>7 landline and highspeed internet.</p> <p>8 Nonetheless, I'm very hesitant to consider any other</p> <p>9 company. Where is the market? How do I make comparisons?</p> <p>10 I get ads from big companies, usually bragging about no</p> <p>11 contract, which leaves customers with no assurance as to</p> <p>12 what to expect. And they probably don't have landline</p> <p>13 capability. At least if I sit tight, my rates with CL</p> <p>14 shouldn't rise.</p> <p>15 I prefer landline to cell phone. I have an answer machine</p> <p>16 and several phones in the house so I can easily answer a</p> <p>17 call, don't need to wonder where I left the cell last -- in</p> <p>18 a coat pocket? In the car? I don't want to have to</p> <p>19 purchase pricey new equipment every few years. I haven't</p> <p>20 had to get a new phone for several decades. I don't need to</p> <p>21 worry about the none being charged, though while changing my</p> <p>22 internet service several years ago, CL connected my landline</p> <p>23 to the data line without telling or asking me. That means</p> <p>24 if the power goes out, the phone doesn't work.</p> <p>25 Was that allowed by UTC? I might not have made the</p>

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1 change, had I known.
 2 I don't text. I used the cell during COVID to advise Fred
 3 Meyer when I was ready to pick up groceries. I take it in
 4 the car in case of some kind of mishap. That's about it.
 5 Evidently CL intends to stop providing landline service if
 6 you let them. I object to this. Where is my alternative?
 7 Why do these companies -- these slick companies get to
 8 function without any regulations? Is your interest in their
 9 profit or in customers' needs?
 10 Thank you for this opportunity to speak.
 11 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much for your
 12 comments tonight.
 13 Richard Johnson, are you there?
 14 RICHARD JOHNSON: Yes, I'm here.
 15 CHAIR DANNER: Yes, go right ahead.
 16 RICHARD JOHNSON: Hello. My name is Richard Johnson. And
 17 my wife and I live in Okanogan County, south of the town
 18 of Okanogan. My wife Mary and I are in our 70s.
 19 When electricity goes out, the telephone landline is the
 20 only way we have to contact the PUD. It is the only means
 21 we have of contacting a doctor or the hospital in case of
 22 emergencies. In short, it is our only contact with the
 23 outside world.
 24 Our electricity goes out when the snow is very wet and/or
 25 when there is a strong wind or fire in the area. Two years

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1 ago, it began snowing in early November and did not melt
 2 until late April. During this time, when the wind came up,
 3 it drifted snow across the driveways and roads, and we
 4 experienced loss of electricity each time, but we always had
 5 our phone, our landline.
 6 Without our landline, we could be stranded under several
 7 different conditions.
 8 And that's all I have. And I want to thank you very much
 9 for your time.
 10 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you so much for
 11 participating tonight.
 12 Let me go back and see if Nora Sheridan has joined us?
 13 Nora Sheridan, are you there?
 14 And Norma Fried, are you there?
 15 Dorn Campbell, are you there?
 16 All right. Beatrice Lackaff, are you there?
 17 MS. LACKAFF: Yes, I am.
 18 CHAIR DANNER: All right.
 19 MS. LACKAFF: Can you hear me?
 20 CHAIR DANNER: Yes.
 21 MS. LACKAFF: Let's see. Thank you. I want to thank you,
 22 the UTC, for hearing us. I believe that you're a publicly
 23 funded agency whose purpose is protect the citizenry from
 24 unregulated capitalism and -- among other purposes that you
 25 might have. And this is a situation where we, the people,

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1 desperately need you to protect us from letting CenturyLink
 2 abandon our service for internet, phone, cell phone; all of
 3 our communications are dependent upon our router and our
 4 landline that we get.
 5 And I live in -- I'm sorry. I didn't explain. I live in
 6 rural Klickitat County. And all of my neighbors -- some of
 7 my neighbors have other options because they might have the
 8 ability to get Starlink or to be close enough to a service
 9 area of another provider.
 10 But many of us do not have any other alternatives. We are
 11 as a captive customer base, according to the definition.
 12 And I think the gentleman, Joseph Medeiros, who quoted
 13 Comcast as saying, "You belong to CenturyLink," that's our
 14 situation as well. We are a captive customer base.
 15 And we depend on them. It's a vitally essential utility
 16 because of wildfires, because of medical emergencies. My
 17 husband's son was recently -- only survived a heart attack
 18 because he had the -- he was able to call the EMTs, and they
 19 got him to the hospital in time. And he will -- he's
 20 expected to have a full recovery, as much as one can. And
 21 it's only because of the speed that he was able to get help.
 22 And that was entirely dependent on his phone.
 23 And so we really -- yeah, I think it's outrageous for
 24 CenturyLink to pretend that they aren't a sole provider for
 25 many, many of their customers, or if -- I don't know what --

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1 how they're trying to prove that to you.
 2 But you must, please, hear us that many of us are utterly
 3 dependent upon them and have no other choices.
 4 And let me see. Oh, I want to say when their technical
 5 people come out, they're always very helpful and honest, and
 6 it's not them that we don't trust and that are -- we feel
 7 are not on our side.
 8 I think that's really all I -- oh, I had one more problem
 9 with trying to understand CenturyLink's -- this is a
 10 rhetorical question. CenturyLink said, "Oh, we're going
 11 protect 800 families or 800 customer family situations."
 12 And it was so vague. It was, like, is that in Klickitat
 13 County? It might take care of everybody in one county in
 14 Washington or maybe not even one county. That's -- it's --
 15 if that is their gesture for showing concern and
 16 responsibility for their customers, I just don't understand
 17 how they could even pretend that was a -- anything but a
 18 ludicrous offer to make.
 19 And so I'm -- we are all quite desperate that this doesn't
 20 happen, I must say. And the other people can control
 21 themselves better than I can in explaining to this that I'm
 22 sorry for that.
 23 But thank you for hearing us.
 24 And that's what I have to say.
 25 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you so much for sharing

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1 your thoughts tonight.
 2 And I'm going to go back.
 3 Norma Fried, we have called on you a couple of times and
 4 did not get a response. I don't know if -- you have to
 5 press star 6 to unmute yourself. But we are not accepting
 6 comments in the chat.
 7 So you would like to make a comment, let me give you that
 8 opportunity right now.
 9 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Or she may just need to unmute her
 10 microphone.
 11 CHAIR DANNER: Yeah. We can't hear you.
 12 All right. We will move on, then, to Tracy Mccune.
 13 Are you there?
 14 MALE SPEAKER: I can try to unmute Norma from here.
 15 MS. MCCUNE: Can you hear me?
 16 CHAIR DANNER: Ah, is that Norma?
 17 MS. MCCUNE: Can you hear me?
 18 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Yes, we can hear you.
 19 MS. MCCUNE: That's Tracy.
 20 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Oh, that's Tracy. Okay.
 21 CHAIR DANNER: Oh, Tracy Mccune, please go ahead. We can
 22 hear you.
 23 MS. MCCUNE: So can you hear me clear enough that I can
 24 speak.
 25 CHAIR DANNER: Yes.

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1 MS. MCCUNE: Okay. So my phone decided -- had a full
 2 charge until I called into this meeting, and now the phone
 3 is dead, and I'm on a voiceover IP, and it's extremely hard
 4 to even talk over the static.
 5 But this happens to my phone and my stuff all the time. I
 6 had a speech on my phone that I was going to say today, so
 7 I'm having to say this off the cuff. So here we go.
 8 So on the RCW 80.36.320 that was given at the beginning of
 9 this meeting, at the bottom of that page, it says that this
 10 RCW -- or the Commission ends on June 30th of 2024. So
 11 that's just a couple of weeks after the final hearing.
 12 I'd like to have you Commissioners let me know what that
 13 means. Are we going to end this Commission regardless of
 14 what -- where this regulation goes? But you Commissioners
 15 have a duty, an absolute duty, to have a procedure and a
 16 process in place to unassociate phone numbers with people.
 17 So I'm saying this from firsthand experience. I had a
 18 land line with CenturyLink, and it's in the early 2000s.
 19 And when we were able to port that number over to a cell
 20 phone number, I did just that. I was told that UScellular,
 21 it would take two to three weeks because the CenturyLink
 22 owned the Hood River prefixes.
 23 But I went ahead and had it ported over. I waited the two
 24 or three weeks. I got my landline as a cell phone. And
 25 it's the worst mistake I've made in my entire life.

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1 So my name and that landline phone number are attached.
 2 That means that anybody who wants to can attach my name and
 3 that landline number to any internet account they wish. I
 4 don't have access to that phone number anymore. Emergency
 5 management for Klickitat County has attachment to that
 6 number.
 7 And I have proof of all this.
 8 But there has to be a way to unattach numbers and people
 9 because, you know, when you think about it, technology these
 10 days, we -- we turn on our lights in our house with our
 11 phone number. We -- our cars are associated with a number.
 12 You know, our number associates all of us to everything.
 13 Phones are very important.
 14 And landlines are included in that because when a landline
 15 is shut off by CenturyLink, they retain that phone number,
 16 and they retain that association to that number, and there's
 17 absolutely zero ways to get CenturyLink or anybody else to
 18 take that number off of your name. So, for example, the
 19 alert, the Klickitat County alert system, I called both
 20 (inaudible) and RAVE, and that should be used for the alert.
 21 Both of them said that I had -- my alerts were set up and
 22 they had the wrong name, wrong phone number, the landline
 23 number that I no longer have, and wrong address. So if
 24 emergency management wanted to get to me, they're not going
 25 to be able to.

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1 And that's a serious problem.
 2 So there needs to be a procedure and process in place by
 3 this Commission before you ever think about doing anything
 4 except for regulating CenturyLink more because if people
 5 don't get disassociated, then CenturyLink can misappropriate
 6 their information and their phone.
 7 So I guess that sums up my comments. I'm against --
 8 strongly against CenturyLink's petition. And I believe the
 9 Commissioners have a duty to protect the people and their
 10 private information.
 11 And thank you for (inaudible).
 12 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much for sharing
 13 your comments tonight.
 14 All right.
 15 I'm going to go back again, Nora Sheridan, are you there?
 16 And Dorn Campbell, are you there?
 17 All right. Let me ask if there is anyone else on the line
 18 who wishes to speak tonight? That's everyone that I have on
 19 the sign-in sheet, but I see some other names on the line.
 20 Jake Williams, are you there?
 21 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, I am. Can you hear me okay?
 22 CHAIR DANNER: Yes. Go right ahead.
 23 MR. WILLIAMS: Hello. Thank you. Thanks for letting me
 24 speak.
 25 My name is Jake Williams. I currently work for

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1 Communication Workers of America, which is a -- one of the
 2 labor unions that represents a lot of the CenturyLink, Lumen
 3 technicians in Washington state.
 4 But before that, I was a network technician, data
 5 technician for Lumen for over 30 years in Tacoma,
 6 Washington, and I currently do still live in Tacoma,
 7 Washington.
 8 Communication Workers of America, CWA, opposes Lumen's
 9 competitive classification petition. If Lumen -- if Lumen's
 10 petition is approved, they could further reduce, you know,
 11 the Washington technician workforce, and customer support
 12 workforce because it wouldn't be -- they wouldn't be
 13 obligated to provide service to you all the customers in the
 14 legacy exchange footprint. And no voice service provider
 15 would be obligated to provide service in those Lumen areas
 16 or those CenturyLink areas now.
 17 In the industry, this is what is called "digital
 18 redlining." And it should not be allowed. Providing
 19 service in all areas is just as important as electricity and
 20 other utilities. And as everyone has spoken before, to be
 21 able to walk away and not provide service is -- it's just
 22 not right. It's just not right, especially since they've
 23 been allowed and they've benefitted from this service for
 24 years and years and years and people have paid their bills.
 25 Earlier this year, you were reminded of the continued

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1 importance of landline telephone service when AT&T wireless
 2 network suffered on hours-long nationwide disruption. And
 3 for some Washingtonians, especially our elderly and rural
 4 residents, landline services are the only safe, affordable,
 5 and reliable phone service. Landlines can be more reliable
 6 than cell phones for emergencies and disasters, especially
 7 during a power outage. That is said -- that was said
 8 earlier.
 9 We also concerned that low-income households may expect an
 10 increase in their monthly phone bills if they have to go to
 11 other companies like Starlink and things like that.
 12 So for similar reasons, the California Public Utility
 13 Commission denied AT&T's petition earlier this year to
 14 withdraw as a carrier of last resort in California.
 15 So we urge the Washington PSC to demonstrate its continued
 16 commitment to ensuring that every Washingtonian has access
 17 to affordable, reliable, telecommunication service by
 18 rejecting CenturyLink's, Lumen's attempt to cut service in
 19 our most vulnerable residents -- to our most vulnerable
 20 residents.
 21 Thank you.
 22 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.
 23 Appreciate your comments.
 24 So, Mel, are there others who are on the line wishing to
 25 speak?

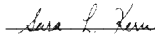
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1 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: I am not aware of any others. We
 2 are still trying to get --
 3 JOY M.: Yes, hello?
 4 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: -- Norma.
 5 Is this Norma? Hi.
 6 JOY M.: This is Joy Markaraf.
 7 CHAIR DANNER: All right.
 8 JOY M.: I'm going to make this real short, but -- and I
 9 guess it's concerning Docket UT-240029.
 10 And I'm a citizen of rural Klickitat County. I'm 79 years
 11 old and living alone. And I've been paying my landline
 12 service to CenturyLink for 30 years.
 13 I don't have cell service at my residence. And if they
 14 don't -- if they drop my landline, what would I do in an
 15 emergency? And it would be very lonely without being able
 16 to talk to my family and friends.
 17 So please don't let CenturyLink take my landline away.
 18 Thank you very much.
 19 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much.
 20 Can you spell your last name for us for our records?
 21 JOY M.: Yes. It's M-a-r-k-a-r-a-f.
 22 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you very much. And appreciate your
 23 sharing your comments with us tonight.
 24 JOY M.: Okay. I appreciate you taking my call and doing
 25 this service to help the more vulnerable people in this

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1 world. Thank you.
 2 CHAIR DANNER: Thank you.
 3 All right.
 4 Is there anyone else on the line who wishes to speak who
 5 has not yet spoken?
 6 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: I believe we're still trying to see
 7 if Norma is able to make her comments.
 8 Ryan is trying to help with her and muted, so if we could
 9 just pause for a moment to let her (inaudible).
 10 CHAIR DANNER: Okay. We will do that.
 11 In the meantime, I will again ask if there's anyone else
 12 on the line who hasn't spoken who wishes to speak up
 13 tonight.
 14 Okay. We will take a moment to see if we get Norma Fried
 15 connected.
 16 All right. It does not appear... All right.
 17 Ryan Smith is trying one more time to call her back. I
 18 think we're just having technical difficulties.
 19 All right. Apparently, we are not connecting with her.
 20 It appears we have no one else on the line who wishes to
 21 share comments with us today.
 22 We are still accepting written comments. And you can see
 23 the -- on the screen that if you have comments that you want
 24 to submit, you can do so by emailing them to
 25 comments@utc.wa.gov or by calling 1-888-333-WUTC.

1 So, Mel, I'm going to turn it back to you: Is there
 2 anything else we need to communicate before we adjourn?
 3 MS. CASTANEDA-KERSON: No. I think that's it.
 4 Thank you, everybody, for attending and taking the time to
 5 be here tonight.
 6 Looks like Tad is on the line. You can reach out to
 7 Public Counsel as well. And if you have any questions, my
 8 contact information is there. Please reach out to me.
 9 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Thank you very much.
 10 Tad Roberts O'Neill, is there anything that you would like
 11 to say before we close?
 12 MR. ROBINSON O'NEILL: Yeah, thank you, everybody.
 13 My name is Tad Robinson O'Neill. I'm the attorney from
 14 Public Counsel in this matter. And you can reach out to
 15 Public Counsel at the email address provided. And we will
 16 coordinate to make sure your comments are filed.
 17 The only thing I would add to, Chair Danner, is that
 18 hearing for this matter is currently scheduled for
 19 July 19th, and that's date at which we've set for accepting
 20 written comments, through July 19th of this year at the
 21 email addresses or phone numbers that are listed on your
 22 screen right now.
 23 And then the -- we will -- Public Counsel will be sure to
 24 work with UTC Staff in order to file those comments in an
 25 exhibit a week later than that, on the 26th.

1 CERTIFICATE
 2
 3 STATE OF WASHINGTON)
 4)
 5 COUNTY OF KING)
 6 I, the undersigned, do hereby certify under penalty
 7 of perjury that the foregoing recorded statements, hearings
 8 and/or interviews were transcribed under my direction as a
 9 certified transcriptionist; and that the transcript is true and
 10 accurate to the best of my knowledge and ability, that I am not a
 11 relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the
 12 parties hereto, nor financially interested in its outcome.
 13
 14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this
 15 21st day of June, 2024.
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20 
 21 s/ Sara L. Kern, CET
 22
 23
 24
 25



1 CHAIR DANNER: All right. Very good.
 2 And those -- that exhibit will be part of the record, and
 3 we will consider it as part of this proceeding.
 4 So thank you for that.
 5 And let me turn to my colleagues, Commissioner Rendahl,
 6 Commissioner Doumit, anything that you would like to say
 7 before we adjourn tonight?
 8 COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Just appreciate people calling in
 9 and appearing and giving us their comments tonight. Very
 10 much appreciate it.
 11 COMMISSIONER DOUMIT: Same. Same for me, Chair Danner.
 12 Thank you to all who participated tonight. Appreciated all
 13 your words. Thank you.
 14 CHAIR DANNER: Okay. And I echo that. Thanks to everyone
 15 who participated.
 16 We will take this matter under advisement, and with that,
 17 we are adjourned. Thank you all very much.
 18 (Conclusion of hearing)
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