

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of

THE CENTURLINK COMPANIES –
QWEST CORPORATION;
CENTURYTEL OF WASHINGTON;
CENTURYTEL OF INTERISLAND;
CENTURYTEL OF COWICHE; AND
UNITED TELEPHONE COMPANY OF
THE NORTHWEST

To be Regulated Under an Alternative Form
of Regulation Pursuant to RCW 80.36.135.

Docket UT-130477

ORDER 07

GRANTING PETITION TO
EXTEND ALTERNATIVE FORM
OF REGULATION PLAN AND
AMENDING ORDER 04

BACKGROUND

- 1 On January 9, 2014, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) entered Order 04 approving and adopting settlement agreements between the CenturyLink Companies – Qwest Corporation, CenturyTel of Washington, CenturyTel of Inter Island, CenturyTel of Cowiche, and United Telephone Company of the Northwest (collectively referred to as CenturyLink or Company), Commission Staff (Staff), the Public Counsel Unit of the Office of the Attorney General (Public Counsel), Sprint Nextel Corporation, and the United States Department of Defense and other federal executive agencies. The settlement agreements established an alternative form of regulation (AFOR) for the Company pursuant to RCW 80.36.135.
- 2 On June 5, 2020, CenturyLink, Staff, and Public Counsel (collectively Stipulating Parties) filed a stipulation for a one-year extension of the current AFOR plan in this docket, and a petition to modify the settlement and order approving the settlement in accordance with the extension (Petition).
- 3 The AFOR plan currently expires on January 9, 2021, and requires Staff to review the plan beginning on July 9, 2020, six months in advance of the plan’s expiration, to determine whether changing conditions warrant modification of the plan. The Stipulating Parties, however, agree that it may be impractical to conduct such a review in light of the limitations on Commission and party resources resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Those parties, therefore, have agreed to seek a one year extension of the plan and to modify the pre-expiration review process to require CenturyLink to petition to open a new AFOR docket and provide its proposed changes or a new plan to the parties to initiate discussions.

4 To implement their agreement, the Stipulating Parties stipulate to the following revisions to paragraph 2 of the Amended Stipulated Plan for Alternative Form of Regulation:¹

2) The terms of this plan for AFOR will be effective upon approval by the Commission and will remain in effect until January 9, 2022 ~~for seven years~~ unless extended or modified by Commission order.

a) ~~During the six months prior to the 7 year anniversary of the AFOR,~~ CenturyLink shall file a petition to open a new AFOR docket on July 1, 2021. CenturyLink will also provide the parties a new proposed plan of AFOR, without filing it in the docket, and the Commission's Staff will conduct a review of the provisions of this proposed AFOR to determine if changing conditions warrant ~~modifications to the plan~~ new provisions. All parties to ~~this the~~ AFOR proceeding will have access to the same material made available to Commission Staff by CenturyLink.

b) During the course of that review any of the parties to this AFOR proceeding may propose or oppose modifications for consideration by Commission Staff. Upon conclusion of the review but not later than ~~the seven year anniversary the~~ January 7, 2022, CenturyLink will file the new plan, as either an agreed plan or a proposed plan, and the Commission will provide notice to the parties and hold a proceeding in which parties may advocate for or against the new plan.

c) While the Commission deliberates, the terms of this AFOR shall continue in force.²

5 The Stipulating Parties represent that the other parties do not oppose the Petition.

DISCUSSION

6 We grant the Petition. We are aware of no pressing issues or concerns with the current AFOR and agree that continuing the plan for an additional year will conserve Commission and party resources during this challenging time. The revised pre-expiration process the Stipulating Parties propose is also reasonable, although the Commission expects that when CenturyLink files a new AFOR plan on or before January 7, 2022, to ensure transparency, the Company will also file the plan it proposed to the parties on July

¹ Order 04, Appendix A (Staff/Public Counsel Settlement), Attachment A.

² Petition ¶ 4. Added text is underlined, and deleted text is stricken through.

1, 2021. With that understanding, we will modify Order 04 to incorporate the Stipulating Parties' proposed revisions.

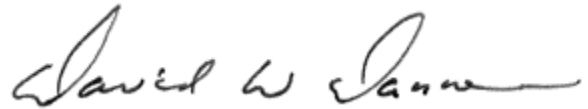
ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS That

- 7 (1) The Commission grants the petition for a one-year extension of the current plan of alternative form of regulation the Commission approved in Order 04.
- 8 (2) The Commission amends paragraph 2 of the Amended Stipulated Plan for Alternative Form of Regulation attached as Appendix A, Attachment A, to Order 04 as provided in paragraph 4 of this Order.
- 9 (3) The Commission retains jurisdiction to enforce the terms of the orders in this docket.

DATED at Olympia, Washington and effective June 18, 2020.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



DAVID W. DANNER, Chair



ANN E. RENDAHL, Commissioner



JAY M. BALASBAS, Commissioner