

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of	)	DOCKET NO. UT-041406
	)	
ELLENSBURG TELEPHONE	)	ORDER NO. 01
COMPANY,	)	
	)	
Petitioner,	)	
	)	
Seeking A Second Exemption from	)	
the Limited Provisions of WAC	)	
480-120-172(7)(a)(iii) Relating to	)	ORDER GRANTING LIMITED
Company Initiated Service	)	AND TEMPORARY
Discontinuation Notices.	)	EXEMPTION FROM RULE
.....	)	

**BACKGROUND**

- 1     On June 27, 2003, the Commission granted a limited and temporary exemption from WAC 480-120-161(6), relating to Form of Bills; and WAC 480-120-172(7)(a)(ii) and WAC 480-120-172(7)(a)(iii), relating to Company Initiated Service Discontinuation Notices. Ellensburg Telephone Company (Ellensburg or the Company) was able to come into compliance with WAC 480-120-161(6) and WAC 480-120-172(7)(a)(ii) prior to the expiration of the waiver.
- 2     On August 6, 2004, the Company filed a petition requesting a second extension of the limited and temporary exemption from WAC 480-120-172(7)(a)(iii) which requires that each disconnect notice include a statement that clearly indicates the amount a customer must pay to maintain basic service or restricted basic service, regardless of the full amount owed by the customer.
- 3     The Company states it is unable to comply with WAC 480-120-172(7)(a)(iii) without performing manual calculations and manually generating a notice prior to disconnecting service. The Company indicates that this process would

substantially increase Ellensburg's collection costs. The Company maintains that its existing accounts receivable program is not able to produce the required information. Ellensburg anticipated that a new accounts receivable program would be in place prior to September 1, 2003. Ellensburg provided a copy of the contract agreement with CSG Software dated June 20, 2003, to implement the necessary billing changes. The original schedule provided by the vendor was September 21, 2003. The revised schedule from Ellensburg's vendor indicates these changes will not be effective until January 19, 2005. Ellensburg is seeking a limited and temporary exemption from this rule until March 1, 2005.

- 4 The Company has committed to call all customers who are sent disconnect notices and verbally inform them of the amount they must pay in order to retain basic service.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the State of Washington vested by statute with the authority to regulate rates, rules, regulations, practices, accounts, securities, and transfers of public service companies, including telecommunications companies. *RCW 80.01.040; Chapter 80.04 RCW and Chapter 80.36 RCW.*
- 6 (2) Ellensburg is engaged in the business of providing telecommunications services within the state of Washington and is a public service company subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission under the provisions of Chapter 80.36 RCW.
- 7 (3) Ellensburg is subject to the provisions of WAC 480-120-172(7)(a)(iii) which requires a statement in the required notice for disconnection of service that

clearly indicates the amount a customer must pay to maintain basic service or restricted basic service, regardless of the full amount owed by the customer.

- 8 (4) WAC 480-120-015 provides that the Commission may grant an exemption from the provisions of any rule in Chapter 480-120 WAC, if consistent with the public interest, the purposes underlying regulation, and applicable statutes.
- 9 (5) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 22, 2004.
- 10 (6) After review of the petition filed in Docket UT-041406 by Ellensburg on August 8, 2004, and giving due consideration, the Commission finds that the limited and temporary exemption is reasonable and should be granted until March 1, 2005.

## ORDER

### THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 11 (1) After the effective date of this Order, Ellensburg Telephone Company is granted a limited and temporary exemption from WAC 480-120-172(7)(a)(iii), related to including a statement in the required notice that clearly indicates the amount a customer must pay to maintain basic service or restricted basic service, regardless of the full amount owed by the customer, for a temporary amount of time until March 1, 2005.
- 12 (2) This exemption is subject to the following conditions. The Company will call all customers who are sent disconnect notices and verbally inform

them of the amount they must pay in order to retain basic service. The Company will provide timely notification to the Commission of any further delays in its vendor's schedule to install the new billing system.

- 13 (3) The Commission retains jurisdiction over the subject matter and Company to effectuate the provisions of this Order.

The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the public interest, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 22nd day of September, 2004.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary