

### EXHIBIT 3

#### DEMONSTRATION OF RISK OF RATE INSTABILITY OR SERVICE INTERRUPTION OR CESSATION

The operating environment in which the Company finds itself has created a climate of great financial uncertainty. The Company has been working over the past several years to address growing competition. The Company has taken steps to increase the availability and attributes of advanced services offered by the Company, including broadband. This has resulted in the Company making additional investments in regulated plant of approximately \$628,630 during the period 2011 through 2014. The Company has installed a fiber-to-the-home network in its study area during the years of 2007 through 2009 for the approximate cost of \$10,457,000. As a result, the Company has a substantial debt obligation to cover the investment that has been made.

The overall financial condition of the Company is detailed on other Exhibits to this Petition. What this information demonstrates is that, when adjusted to eliminate the support from the state Universal Communications Services Program that the Company received or accrued in 2014, the Company's total regulated revenue decreased by 4.9 percent from 2011 through 2014. The Company has looked for ways to lower expenses. However, much of the Company's operating expenses are fixed obligations, such as debt-related payments.

As an example of why state Program support is needed, the Company's receipt of revenue from the traditional Washington intrastate universal service access rate element and related pooling fund were terminated effective July 1, 2014. Since then, the loss of revenues derived from the traditional universal service access rate element has been off-set by revenues received by the Company as a result of its participation in the Program. Using 2012 as a base line, the Company is facing a loss of traditional universal service fund revenues of approximately \$4,575 per year if its participation in the Program is not renewed.

As another example, some of the financial uncertainty that the Company faces stems from the USF/ICC Transformation Order issued by the Federal Communications Commission.<sup>1</sup> The USF/ICC Transformation Order has built in an automatic decline in the Company's intrastate and interstate access revenues. The intercarrier compensation portion of the Transformation Order introduces a concept of a base line year for calculating terminating access and reciprocal compensation revenues and provides support from the Connect America Fund ("CAF") based on the base line year. However, the base line year revenues (from which the level of CAF support is derived) are reduced iteratively by five percent each year. The CAF support reduction began in

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<sup>1</sup> *In the Matter of Connect America Fund, A National Broadband Plan for Our Future, Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, High-Cost Universal Service Support, Developing an Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, Lifeline and Link-Up, Universal Service Reform - Mobility Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WC Docket No. 05-337, CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, WT Docket No. 10-208, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 11-161 (rel. Nov. 18, 2011)(*USF/ICC Transformation Order*).

July 2012. Projecting through the calendar year 2016, including additional reductions that will occur July 1, 2016, the Company has seen a reduction in support from the base line revenue amount of approximately \$47,733 for 2016.

On top of all this, during the four-year period ended December 31, 2014, the Company has seen its Federal high cost loop support undergo a significant reduction, declining from \$1,908,342 in 2011 to \$1,687,505 in 2014. This loss has not been made up by increases in other federal USF support programs.

These factors, among others, have led to the strained financial condition of the Company as reflected in the financial reports that are part of the Petition.

The combination of factors noted above creates a situation in which, without support from the state universal communications services program, the Company may be faced with a choice of increasing rates further or reducing service in order to be able to match expenses to revenues. Neither choice presents a viable path for providing continued high quality service to customers. The dilemma presented by these choices reflects the risk of rate instability or service interruption or cessation to which the Company is subject.