

**Comments in Support of a Telecommunications Consumer Bill of Rights
to be included in Docket No. UT-990146.**

We respectfully request the Commission to adopt a Telecommunications Consumer Bill of Rights. This document contains some proposed language, based on a review of the Draft of UT-990146 Chapter 480-120 dated August 23, 2001; the Telecommunications Act of 1996; other state Commission's adopted or proposed Consumer Bill of Rights; Telecommunications Expert's Reports on Consumer Protection and Consumer Rights; and informal roundtable discussions among consumer advocates in the state of Washington.

There is a critical need for a Telecommunications Consumer Bill of Rights. The past decade has seen a rapid evolution in telecommunications technology, the industry's structure, the mix of services offered, and the ways services can be provided. Regulatory policies have evolved and are evolving in ways aimed at enabling and promoting competition and the benefits competition can provide. The combination of rapid changes in telecommunications technology, industry structure, and service options has had an unprecedented effect on consumers, creating high levels of confusion and frustration.

The proposed Consumer Bill of Rights is not intended to introduce new rules or regulations but to present existing rules and regulations in a new format that is more accessible to consumers. The Bill of Rights can also function as a guide to the Commission and others when considering amendments to existing rules and regulations or new rules and regulations to ensure that changes continues to support the Commission's intended consumer protection.

Many state Commissions have balanced the shift from the regulatory process to deregulation and encouraged competition by a renewed focus on consumer protection, and the endorsement of a consumer bill of rights. We respectfully request the Washington State Utility and Transportation Commission to adopt the attached Telecommunications Consumer Bill of Rights.

Sincerely,

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Attachment A. Telecommunications Consumer Bill of Rights

Attachment B. UT Rulemaking Support: Specific sections of Draft UT-990146 that support each proposed "Right."

Attachment C. Other State's Consumer Bill of Rights

- C1.** Wisconsin: Your Rights as a Telephone Customer
- C2.** Ohio: Telephone Customer Bill of Rights
- C3.** California: Consumer Rights
- C4.** Vermont: Consumer Bill of Rights