



**Washington Public Interest Research Group**

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## **WashPIRG Comments to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Regarding Qwest's Request to Terminate Its Service Quality Performance Plan**

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On behalf of our 20,000 members in Washington, the Washington Public Interest Research Group (WashPIRG) respectfully asks the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to deny Qwest's request to terminate its Service Quality Performance Plan. Qwest would not have been asked to sign this agreement if it had a record of even average customer service. Unfortunately, Qwest customers have logged thousands of complaints against the company over the last few years, and while its service has improved somewhat since it signed the agreement, the company must show more consistent improvement before the agreement is terminated. In fact, one of the reasons Qwest's service has improved is because it signed the agreement, which holds the company accountable for its poor service. Clearly, we agree with the statement of Commission Staff on 4/14/04 that "the mechanism is working in the way it was intended, to improve the company's incentives to provide good service to its customers. The program has contributed to the public interest both by improving the quality of Qwest's retail service and by providing one of the very few tangible consumer benefits from what has otherwise been a generally unsuccessful takeover of the company by Qwest."

A couple of months ago, we sent an alert to our email activists urging them to contact the WUTC urge it to deny Qwest's request to terminate its SQPP. Over 600 activists responded to the alert, which is 2-3 times the number of responses our alerts usually generate. In addition, many of those respondents included personal stories/examples of their recent negative experiences with Qwest's service. The response of our activists to our alert exemplifies the strong public sentiment for Qwest to continue to abide by the requirements of the SQPP.

Again, we strongly urge the Commission to reject Qwest's request to end prematurely the performance contract it signed. It is a critical way to hold the company's feet to the fire and ensure it serves its customers properly. If Qwest is truly concerned about serving its customers, it will drop its petition and focus its attention on improving its customer service.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Qwest's request to terminate its Service Quality Performance Plan.

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