

1
2
3
4
5
6 **BEFORE THE WASHINGTON**
7 **UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

8 IN RE

9
10 PETITION OF WESTERN WAHAKIYAKUM
11 COUNTY TELEPHONE COMPANY TO
12 RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE STATE
13 UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS
14 SERVICES PROGRAM

DOCKET NO. UT-230607

PETITION FOR SUPPORT

15 COMES NOW Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company, d/b/a Wahkiakum West
16 Telephone and d/b/a WWEST Communications ("Company"), and, pursuant to Chapter 480-123 of
17 the Washington Administrative Code ("WAC") including, but not limited to, WAC 480-123-110,
18 hereby petitions the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (the "Commission") to
19 receive support from the State Universal Communications Services Program (the "Program") for
20 the Program year 2023.

21 **I. Demonstration of Eligibility under WAC 480-123-100**

- 22
23 1. WAC 480-123-100(1)(a): The Company is a local exchange company as defined in WAC
24 480-120-021 that serves less than forty thousand access lines within the state.

25
26 PETITION OF WESTERN WAHAKIYAKUM
COUNTY TELEPHONE COMPANY TO
RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE STATE
UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS
SERVICES PROGRAM - 1

2. WAC 480-123-100(1)(b): The Company is an incumbent local exchange carrier as defined in 47 U.S.C. Sec. 251(h) or has been designated as an incumbent local exchange carrier by the Federal Communications Commission.
3. WAC 480-123-100(1)(c): The Company offers basic residential and business exchange telecommunications services as set forth in WAC 480-120-021 and RCW 80.36.630.
4. WAC 480-123-100(1)(d): The Company has established a plan, as described in WAC 480-123-110, to provide, maintain or enhance broadband service (see II.4 below).
5. WAC 480-123-100(1)(e): The Company has been designated by the Commission as an eligible telecommunications carrier (“ETC”) for purposes of receiving federal universal services support pursuant to 47 C.F.R. Part 54 Subpart D - Universal Service Support for High Cost Areas with respect to the service area for which the Company is seeking Program support.

II. Demonstration of Eligibility under WAC 480-123-110

1. WAC 480-123-110(1)(a): The name of the legal entity that provides communications services and is seeking Program support is as follows: Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company.
2. WAC 480-123-110(1)(b): A corporate organization chart showing the relationship between the Company and all affiliates as defined in RCW 80.16.010 is attached hereto as Exhibit 1.¹

¹ Pursuant to agreement with Commission Staff, Exhibit 1 is limited to those affiliates having transactions with the Company that are to be identified in Exhibit 2.

1 A detailed description of any transactions between the Company and the affiliates named in
2 Exhibit 1 recorded in the Company's operating accounts is attached hereto as Exhibit 2.²

- 3 3. WAC 480-123-110(1)(c): Service area maps for the Company can be found at Sheet Nos.
4 21 and 21.1 of the Company's Tariff WN U-4.
- 5 4. WAC 480-123-110(1)(d): The Company's broadband plan to provide, maintain, or enhance
6 broadband services in its service area is attached hereto as Exhibit 3.
- 7 5. WAC 480-123-110(1)(f): A sworn statement by a Company officer certifying that the
8 Company complies with state and federal accounting, cost allocation, and cost adjustment
9 rules pertaining to incumbent local exchange carriers applicable to the Company is attached
10 hereto as Exhibit 4.
- 11 6. WAC 480-123-110(1)(g): The number of residential local exchange access lines served by
12 the Company as of December 31, 2021, was 691. The number of residential local exchange
13 access lines served by the Company as of December 31, 2020, was 726. The number of
14 business access local exchange access lines, not including official lines, served by the
15 Company as of December 31, 2021, was 147. The number of business local exchange
16 access lines, not including official lines, served by the Company as of December 31, 2020,
17 was 150. The number of "25/3" broadband service connections served by the Company or a
18 Company affiliate as of December 31, 2021, was 611.³ The number of "25/3" broadband
19
20
21

22 ² Pursuant to agreement with the Commission Staff, Exhibit 2 is limited to transactions other than employment
23 compensation and benefits pursuant to employee benefit plans.

24 ³ "25/3" refers to the minimum, nominal download and upload speeds (each, Mbps), respectively, of the broadband
25 service offering to which the customer subscribes, and the counts of service connections that are provided in the
26 sentences to which this footnote is attached include service connections for which the nominal download and upload

1 service connections served by the Company or a Company affiliate as of December 31, 2020
2 was 572. Based upon information currently in the Company's possession, of an estimated
3 approximately 1292 potential broadband locations in the Company's service area,
4 approximately 1292 of such locations have actually available broadband service with
5 capability of broadband speeds of "25/3," or better, provided by the Company or a Company
6 affiliate.⁴ The unbundled monthly basic rate charged by the Company for residential local
7 exchange access service on December 31, 2021, was \$18.00. The unbundled monthly basic
8 rate charged by the Company for residential local access service on December 31, 2020 was
9 \$18.00. The unbundled monthly basic rate charged by the Company for single line business
10 local exchange service on December 31, 2021, was \$18.80. The unbundled monthly basic
11 rate charged by the Company for single line business local exchange access service on
12 December 31, 2020, was \$18.80. (The Company has other business local exchange service
13 rates, but the Company understands that WAC 480-123-110(1)(g) is requesting the single
14
15

16
17 speeds are 25/3 or higher. As used in the principal text, the term "broadband service" is understood to refer to
18 "broadband service," as defined in WAC 480-123-020, which, in turn, incorporates minimum download and upload
19 speed standards established by Commission rule or order. For the Commission's most recent establishment of
20 minimum download and upload speed standards, see Paragraph 15 of the Commission's order, dated May 27, 2020, in
21 Docket No. UT-190437. (See also Note 5 at Paragraph 3 of the Commission's order, dated November 24, 2020, in
22 Docket No. UT-200704.) The total number of broadband service connections served by the Company or its affiliate,
23 including nominal speed tiers not only at or above "25/3," but also below "25/3," as of December 31, 2021, and
24 December 31, 2020, was 944 and 923, respectively. All of the broadband service connections served by the Company
25 or its affiliate for customers who choose to subscribe to broadband service offerings that are less robust than "25/3" are
26 capable of providing "25/3" broadband service or better if the customer were to so choose.

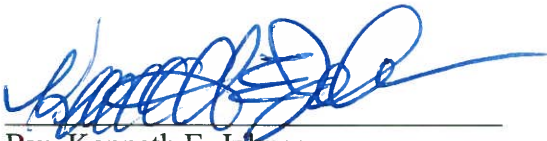
⁴ The definition of the term "actually available," as used in the sentence to which this footnote is attached, is consistent with the meaning of that term found in Paragraph 13 of the FCC's Digital Opportunity Data Collection Report and Order (FCC 19-79) – service is actually available in an area (to a location) if the reporting fixed provider has a current broadband connection to such location, or could provide such a connection within ten business days of a customer request, without an extraordinary commitment of resources, and without construction charges or fees exceeding an ordinary service activation fee.

1 line businesses local exchange access service rate.) The unbundled monthly rates charged
2 by the Company or its affiliate for broadband service as of December 31, 2021, and as of
3 December 31, 2020, are set out in Exhibit 5 attached hereto.

- 4 7. WAC 480-123-110(1)(h): The requested statements are attached hereto as Exhibit 6.
- 5 8. WAC 480-123-110(1)(h)(i): A sworn statement by a Company officer certifying that the
6 Company is in compliance with the Federal Communications Commission's obligation for
7 deployment of broadband at speeds specified by the Federal Communications Commission
8 applicable to the Company and that the Company meets one of the eligibility criteria set out
9 in WAC 480-123-110(1)(j)(ii), (iii) or (iv) is attached hereto as Exhibit 7.
- 10 9. All exhibits attached hereto are incorporated into this Petition as though fully set forth.

11
12
13 Respectfully submitted this 9th day of October, 2023.

14
15 WESTERN WAHAKIUM COUNTY TELEPHONE COMPANY

16
17 

18 By: Kenneth E. Johnson
19 Title: Chief Executive Officer

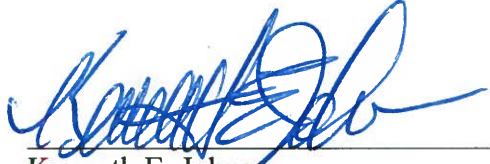
20 CERTIFICATION

21 I, Kenneth E. Johnson, an officer of the Company that is responsible for the Company's
22 business and financial operations, in that capacity hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge,
23 the information and representations set forth in the Petition, above, are accurate and the Company

1 has not knowingly withheld any information required to be provided to the Commission pursuant to
2 the rules governing the Program.

3 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the
4 foregoing is true and correct.

5 Signed this 9th day of October, 2023, at Rosburg, Washington.

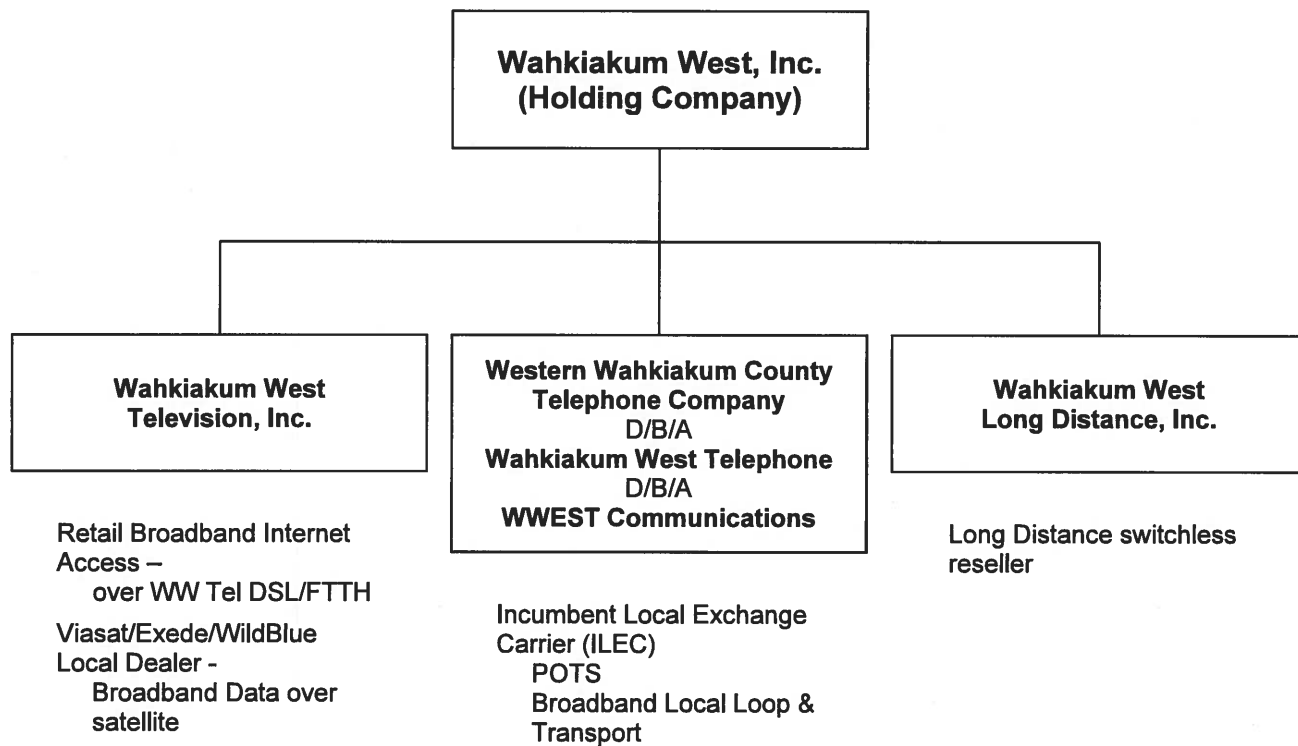
6
7
8 
9 Kenneth E. Johnson
10 Chief Executive Officer

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26

EXHIBIT 1

CORPORATE ORGANIZATION CHART

**Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company
Corporate Structure**



PETITION OF WESTERN WAHAKIUM
COUNTY TELEPHONE COMPANY TO
RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE STATE
UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS
SERVICES PROGRAM -
EXHIBIT 1

EXHIBIT 2

AFFILIATED TRANSACTIONS

Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company (“Wahkiakum West Telephone”), doing business as Wahkiakum West Telephone and as WWEST Communications, is affiliated with Wahkiakum West Long Distance, Inc. (“WWLD”) and Wahkiakum West Television, Inc. (“WWTV”). All three companies are wholly-owned subsidiaries of Wahkiakum West, Inc. Wahkiakum West Telephone currently has transactions with each of WWLD, WWTV and Wahkiakum West, Inc. that are recorded on Wahkiakum West Telephone’s books of account.¹

Wahkiakum West Long Distance, Inc. (WWLD)

WWLD is a switchless toll reseller, which purchases toll from various interexchange carriers and resells it to Wahkiakum West Telephone and its end user customers. The toll appears on the monthly telephone statements of end user customers who have chosen WWLD as their toll provider. Wahkiakum West Telephone provides billing and collection services for WWLD, for which Wahkiakum West Telephone charges WWLD the same tariffed (intrastate service) or contracted (Interstate service) rates that Wahkiakum West Telephone charges any other carrier who uses Wahkiakum West Telephone to do their toll billing and collection. Wahkiakum West Telephone purchases the toll billing receivables from WWLD. The billing and collection charges are collected each month by being netted against the purchase of accounts receivable. Wahkiakum West Telephone also charges Wahkiakum West Long Distance a fully loaded labor rate for any employee time spent on WWLD’s behalf above and beyond what is included in the billing and collection function, such as providing customer service or marketing. The employee time, if any, is tracked via daily time sheets and reimbursed quarterly so that all applicable benefits and payroll taxes are included in the reimbursement. The billing and collection charges are booked by Wahkiakum West Telephone as interstate or intrastate regulated access revenue, as applicable. The reimbursement for loaded labor charges is booked by Wahkiakum West Telephone as a reduction to regulated customer operations expense.

As noted above, WWLD also provides toll service to Wahkiakum West Telephone. Wahkiakum West Telephone pays WWLD WWLD’s price listed rates for such toll service, and books the amounts so incurred to the applicable expense account.

¹ Wahkiakum West Telephone also pays per-meeting director’s fees to the members of its board of directors for their attendance at board meetings.

Wahkiakum West Television, Inc. (WWTV)

WWTV is a retail Internet service provider with the DBAs of Wahkiakum West Internet, Wahkiakum West, and wwest.net, and retails deregulated services such as VoIP and streaming television. WWTV also retails Viasat/Exede/WildBlue Satellite internet services. Wired broadband services are purchased by WWTV from Wahkiakum West Telephone at the NECA tariffed wholesale rates and sold by WWTV to end users under the above Wahkiakum West Television, Inc. DBAs. Wahkiakum West Television purchases its satellite services and equipment directly from an independent third-party vendor. WWTV pays Wahkiakum West Telephone a monthly billing and collection fee based on the number of customers billed each month. WWTV also pays Wahkiakum West Telephone a fully loaded hourly rate for all other employee time spent on behalf of Wahkiakum West Television and any of its services. Employee time, if any, is tracked via daily time sheets and reimbursed quarterly so that all related employee benefits and taxes are included in the reimbursement. The reimbursement for loaded labor charges is booked by Wahkiakum West Telephone as a reduction to regulated customer operations expense.

Wahkiakum West, Inc.

Wahkiakum West, Inc. files a consolidated Federal income tax return that includes Wahkiakum West Telephone. Quarterly income tax payments are made by Wahkiakum West Telephone. Wahkiakum West Inc. and each affiliate reimburse Wahkiakum West Telephone for their respective allocated share of any Federal income tax liability.

From time to time, Wahkiakum West Telephone pays dividends with respect to its issued and outstanding common stock, with such payments being made to Wahkiakum West, Inc.

EXHIBIT 3
BROADBAND PLAN

On July 30, 2020, **Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company** (“Company”¹) adopted a Broadband Plan, as contemplated by RCW 80.36.650(3)(a)(ii) and WAC 480-123-110(1)(d). That plan was submitted to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (“Commission”) as Exhibit 3 to a petition by the Company for support from the state Universal Communications Services Program established by RCW 80.36.650 (“Program”) for the Program year 2021, which petition was assigned by the Commission Docket No. UT-200704 (“July 2020 Petition”). The Company’s broadband plan for Program year 2024 is a continuation of the Company’s broadband plan that was included in the July 2022 Petition and revised in November of 2022, with the following modifications:

(1) As previously adopted, the Company’s Broadband Plan made reference to the Company’s understanding that school classrooms were closed due to the then-pending pandemic; at present, school classrooms in its service area are open for the coming academic year; notwithstanding, the Company is continuing to maintain the publicly accessible hotspots that were mentioned in its Broadband Plan; and

(2) The Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) adopted the Affordable Connectively Program and Lifeline Program, which both provide discounts towards broadband service for eligible households. The Company is participating in these programs.

¹ As used in this Exhibit 3, the term “Company” includes, to the extent applicable, the Company’s affiliate that is an internet service provider.

Set forth below is a revised description of the Company's Broadband Plan, reflecting the above-mentioned modifications.

Pursuant to RCW 80.36.650(3), a recipient of support from the Program is to have adopted a plan to provide, enhance, or maintain broadband services in its service area. As set out in WAC 480-123-110(1)(d), the broadband plan is to include specific elements, but only to the extent applicable to that particular broadband plan. The broadband plan does not have to include all elements, but potential elements include the following: (1) a multi-year investment plan; (2) specific project(s) that are projected to provide or enhance broadband services at speeds required by the Commission or the Federal Communications Commission; (3) a plan for maintenance of broadband services in the provider's service area; (4) a description of how the provider will enhance broadband services in its service area; and (5) any other information that the Commission may request to assist in the Commission's review and analysis of the provider's broadband plan. Where there are specific projects, the project information is to include an estimated timeline, geographic location, number of locations passed, and upload and download speeds that are projected to be produced by the project.

The Company has already constructed facilities sufficient for it to satisfy either criterion three or criterion four of WAC 480-123-110 and, as a result, has placed into service robust broadband infrastructure throughout all populated portions of its service area. Consequently, the Company intends to apply for Program support to allow it to continue to provide telecommunications services and broadband services at the levels that it is providing today, with enhancements where and when appropriate. Accordingly, the Company's plan includes the following elements:

Broadband Plan:

The Company has already built broadband-capable, optical fiber to all existing homes and businesses in its service area, and in the last year, completed the process of converting all customers to the new fiber-optic network service with broadband tiers available up to 1Gbps/1Gbps. All customers requesting new broadband services are also connected to the fiber-optic network facilities for the delivery of broadband service. The new fiber-optic network facilities enhance the Company's ability to deliver higher broadband speeds for all current and future broadband customers.

As of March 1, 2023, all broadband customers were transitioned to the new fiber-optic service. All requests for new broadband services are provisioned on the fiber-optic network.

The installations for newly constructed homes requires investment in both equipment and labor. Although all homes in the Company's service area have access to robust internet speeds up to 1Gbps/1Gbps, some families either have chosen not to subscribe or cannot afford to subscribe to broadband service at home. To help address these circumstances, the Company is maintaining hotspots at locations spread out over its service area. These include the parking lots of the Rosburg Community Hall, the Company's principal business office, and the Appelo Archives Center. These are designed to complement the Company's existing broadband services in its serving area.

The Company has been enabled to do all this largely through its borrowing from the Rural Utilities Service of the United States Department of Agriculture ("RUS"), which has funded the construction of the Company's fiber-to-the-home network, the procurement of the necessary fiber optic cable and associated cable-plant components, as well as the replacements and upgrades to the Company's switching and transport electronics. In turn, such borrowing

has been facilitated by the support that the Company has received from Federal universal service programs and the state Universal Communications Services Program.

In addition to the foregoing, the Company's broadband plan includes continued investment by the Company in the maintenance and enhancement of its telecommunications and broadband network through support contracts with its primary equipment vendors, including Calix, Ribbon, ESRI, and Fujitsu. Such support contracts generally provide for both maintenance of existing platforms, and enhancement of the capabilities those platforms offer as such enhancements become available.

The annual Calix support, maintenance, monitoring, and software update contract expense is \$29,868.70 for Fiber-to-the-Home network elements.

The annual Ribbon Communications support, maintenance, and software update contract expense is \$27,285.08 to maintain the company's Class 5 voice telephone switch.

The annual Fujitsu SONET support, maintenance, and software update contract expense is \$13,925.59 to maintain the company's SONET interconnection network with other voice service providers and the public-switched telephone network.

Moreover, as part of the Company's broadband plan, the Company participates in the FCC's Lifeline Program and Affordable Connectivity Program, and the Company expects to continue to do so for so long as the FCC offers those programs.

The Company anticipates that, if its application for support from the Program during the coming Program year is granted, its expenditures during that period in providing, enhancing, and maintaining broadband services in its service area, including payments in support of the above-mentioned RUS financing, will exceed the funding that it expects to receive from the Program for that period. This expectation reflects the Company's belief that it will continue to

be guided by its goal of providing robust broadband capability wherever such capability is needed within the Company's service area.

Expenses anticipated in the program year of July 2023 through June 2024 include: \$264,000.00 for principal and interest on the RUS broadband construction loans; \$7,500.00 for quarterly maintenance, testing, and repair of the company's standby power generator; \$30,000.00 to repair facility damage due to acts of God and other causes; \$3,500.00 for GIS software licensing to comply with Federal broadband reporting requirements and FCC mandated broadband speed testing; and \$20,000.00 to comply with new FCC Cybersecurity and Supply Chain policy requirements.

Capital expenses anticipated in the program year of July 2023 through June 2024 include: \$35,000.00 for extending existing facilities to new service locations; \$50,000.00 for line extensions to new roads within the service area; and \$75,000.00 for vehicle replacements.

The foregoing updated Broadband Plan was adopted by Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company on October 9th, 2023

EXHIBIT 4

CERTIFICATION RELATING TO ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

I, Kenneth E. Johnson, am an officer of Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company and, in that capacity, I certify that the Company complies with state and federal accounting, cost allocation, and cost adjustment rules pertaining to incumbent local exchange carriers applicable to the Company.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed this 9th day of October, 2023, at Rosburg, Washington.



Kenneth E. Johnson
Chief Executive Office

EXHIBIT 5
BROADBAND RATES

The following tables set forth the unbundled monthly basic rates for broadband service provided by Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company or its affiliate as of December 31, 2022, and as of December 31, 2021:

BROADBAND RATES FOR VOICE SERVICE LOCATIONS as of 12/31/2022

<u>Service Offering</u>	<u>Nominal Speed</u>	<u>Unbundled Monthly Basic Rate</u>
FIBER 30	30 Mbps Down, 15 Mbps Up	\$59.95
FIBER 75	75 Mbps Down, 25 Mbps Up	\$79.95
FIBER 125	125 Mbps Down, 40 Mbps Up	\$99.95
FIBER 300	300 Mbps Down, 65 Mbps Up	\$109.95

BROADBAND RATES FOR NON-VOICE SERVICE LOCATIONS as of 12/31/2022

<u>Service Offering</u>	<u>Nominal Speed</u>	<u>Unbundled Monthly Basic Rate</u>
FIBER 30	30 Mbps Down, 15 Mbps Up	\$71.95
FIBER 75	75 Mbps Down, 25 Mbps Up	\$91.95
FIBER 125	125 Mbps Down, 40 Mbps Up	\$111.95
FIBER 300	300 Mbps Down, 65 Mbps Up	\$121.95

BROADBAND RATES FOR VOICE SERVICE LOCATIONS as of 12/31/2021

<u>Service Offering</u>	<u>Nominal Speed</u>	<u>Unbundled Monthly Basic Rate</u>
FIBER 30	30 Mbps Down, 10 Mbps Up	\$59.95
FIBER 75	75 Mbps Down, 25 Mbps Up	\$79.95
FIBER 125	125 Mbps Down, 40 Mbps Up	\$99.95
FIBER 300	300 Mbps Down, 65 Mbps Up	\$109.95

BROADBAND RATES FOR NON-VOICE SERVICE LOCATIONS as of 12/31/2021

<u>Service Offering</u>	<u>Nominal Speed</u>	<u>Unbundled Monthly Basic Rate</u>
FIBER 30	30 Mbps Down, 10 Mbps Up	\$71.95
FIBER 75	75 Mbps Down, 25 Mbps Up	\$91.95
FIBER 125	125 Mbps Down, 40 Mbps Up	\$111.95
FIBER 300	300 Mbps Down, 65 Mbps Up	\$121.95

PETITION OF WESTERN WAHAKIACUM
COUNTY TELEPHONE COMPANY TO
RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE STATE
UNIVERSAL COMMUNICATIONS
SERVICES PROGRAM –
EXHIBIT 5

EXHIBIT 6

CONTINUED OPERATIONS CERTIFICATE

I, Kenneth E. Johnson, hereby state that I am an officer of Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company ("Company"), and, in that capacity, hereby certify, under penalty of perjury as set forth in RCW 5.50.050, that if the Company receives Program support for the Program Year to which the Petition of which this Exhibit 6 is a part pertains, during that Program Year, (i) the Company will continue to provide communications services pursuant to its tariffs on file with the Commission throughout its service territory in Washington for which it is seeking and receives such Program support and (ii) the Company or its affiliate will continue to provide broadband services throughout its service territory in Washington during the entirety of the year in which the provider is applying for and receives such support from the from the program.

Dated this  day of October, 2023.



Kenneth E. Johnson
Chief Executive Officer


EXHIBIT 7

Certification of Eligibility

I, Kenneth E. Johnson, am an officer of Western Wahkiakum County Telephone Company and in that capacity certify that the Company is in compliance with the Federal Communications Commission's obligation for deployment of broadband at speeds specified by the Federal Communications Commission that apply to the Company.

Further, in that capacity I certify that the Company has broadband service available to one hundred percent of locations within the Company's service area and the Company commits to making broadband service available at 25/3 to any new locations within the Company's service area upon request.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed this  day of October, 2023, at Rosburg, Washington.


Kenneth E. Johnson
Chief Executive Officer