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State of Utah

Department of Commerce Division of Public Utilities

FRANCINE GIANI CHRIS PARKER
Executive Director *Director, Division of Public Utilities*

Comments

Recommendation (No Action Required)

To: Utah Public Service Commission

From: Utah Division of Public Utilities

Chris Parker, Director

William Duncan, Manager

Paul Hicken, Technical Consultant

Date: July 8, 2019

Re: **Status Report of the Division of Public Utilities (DPU) investigation into the Service Quality provided by Frontier Communications, Docket 19-041-04**

Issue

On June 28, 2019 the Public Service Commission of Utah (PSC) issued an order in Dockets 19-041-01, 19-041-02 and 19-041-04 requesting the DPU provide a status report on its undocketed investigation into service quality issues of Citizens Telecommunications Company of Utah dba Frontier Communications of Utah (Frontier). This memo will provide the information requested by the PSC.

Background

In following the formal complaints of Sorrel River Ranch, 19-041-01, and Jayne May, 19-041-02, the DPU became concerned about the commitment to quality service exhibited by Frontier. The DPU was also aware of another formal complaint filed against Frontier in docket 15-041-02 that seemed to exhibit some of the same characteristics as those in the instant complaints. Frontier has also received an abnormal amount of informal complaints over the last few years.

Discussion

Providing adequate, reliable telecommunications services to the residents of Utah does not happen by chance. It is the result of monitoring a number of factors such as capacity, trouble reporting, and aging of infrastructure. This monitoring provides support for wise capital investments that prevent outages, such as those being investigated in the current dockets. However, operating conditions can create unique challenges even with optimal investments. The DPU has also observed (through annual reports filed with the DPU) that in recent years Frontier has reported declining levels of annual capital investment. For these reasons the DPU initiated its own investigation into Frontier's service quality.

The DPU investigation is in its infancy. As of the date of this memo, the DPU has issued one data request on 06/11/2019. Frontier has not yet responded to that data request. The DPU and Frontier have also had informal communications.

The DPU investigation will initially focus on capital investment levels and the decision making process for those investments. The DPU data request also asked about Frontier's compliance with PSC rules R746-340 - Service Quality for Telecommunication Corporations.

The DPU investigation is intended to be broader in scope than the issues contained in the current complaints. The DPU wants to determine if Frontier is investing sufficiently to provide adequate, reliable telecommunications services.

Conclusion

The DPU has not reached a conclusion at this time and makes no recommendation to the PSC.

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