

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**Telecommunications Division  
Carrier Branch**

**RESOLUTION T-17049**

**R E S O L U T I O N**

**Resolution T-17049. Winterhaven Telephone Company, d/b/a TDS Telecom (U-1021-C), Requests Authority To Revise Its Schedule Cal. P.U.C. No. A-24, To Withdraw Its Existing Voice Mail System Due To Its Equipment Vendor Withdrawing Support For Parts, Technical Assistance, And Repair Of Various Equipment Components Needed To Provide This Service.**

**By Advice Letter No. 182, Filed June 30, 2006.**

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**Summary**

This Executive Director Action Resolution authorizes Winterhaven Telephone Company (Winterhaven) to revise its Schedule Cal. P.U.C. No. A-24 to withdraw its old Voice Mail System (VMS) due to Winterhaven's equipment vendor, SS8 Networks, announcing that the current voice mail system is scheduled to become obsolete by the manufacturer and replacement parts are limited in availability. Winterhaven also indicated that SS8 Networks has issued Winterhaven a letter stating that new replacement hardware will no longer be available and that software product support will be ending. Concurrent to Winterhaven's withdraw of its VMS, it will transfer its customers to a new VMS offering which it is adding to its tariff in a separate Advice Letter (No. 183) filing.

**Background**

By Advice Letter (AL) No. 182, filed on June 30, 2006, Winterhaven requests authority to withdraw its old VMS.

In its Schedule No. A-24 tariff, Winterhaven states that its old VMS is a central office based service which provides customers with the capability to receive, send, store, and retrieve voice messages over the telephone network. This service is offered from the central offices where Simplified Message Desk Interface II (SMDI II) service and VMS facilities are available.

VSM answers incoming calls placed to the customer's telephone line, when the called number is busy and/or if the called number does not answer. The service will greet incoming callers with a personal or a Utility-provided greeting. VSM then receives and saves the caller's messages for review by the customer. Customers can retrieve messages left for them from any touchtone phone using a passcode. VMS is available to both business and residential customers.

Winterhaven's VMS was originally provisioned and supported by equipment vendor SS8 Networks. In its filing Winterhaven included a notice that it had received from SS8 Networks, on or around December 31, 2004, in which SS8 Networks informed Winterhaven that its VMS (Series 6 software version 6.3) was scheduled to begin being phased out effective December 31, 2004, with total support ending on December 31, 2009.

Winterhaven also filed AL No. 183, on June 30, 2006, in which it is requesting Commission authority to add a new Voice Mail offering. In its AL No. 183 filing, Winterhaven states that the new filing includes the services of the old VMS as well as two new offerings, Family Mailbox and Voice Mailbox Plus. A review of the two advice letter filings and discussions with Winterhaven determined that Winterhaven proposes to transfer its approximately 80 existing VMS customers to its new VSM, as contained in AL No. 183, concurrent with Commission approval of its request to withdraw its old VMS on August 4, 2006.

In both its AL filings (Nos. 182 and 183), Winterhaven requested an August 4, 2006 effective date for both the withdrawal of its old VMS and the initiation of its new VMS.

### **Notice/Protests**

Notice of AL No. 182 was published in the Commission Daily Calendar of July 7, 2006. No protests to this Advice Letter have been received by the Commission.

In its AL No. 182 filing, Winterhaven included a copy of a notice that they stated was mailed out on June 28, 2006 to customers who presently subscribe to the old VMS. The notice explains the changes that would be taking place with the Utility's VMS offering. The notice instructs customers to write to the Commission's Telecommunications Division Director Jack Leutza, if they wish to file a protest. The notice also contains the email and mailing addresses and telephone numbers for the Commission's Public Advisor's office, for customers wishing to file comments. Winterhaven also lists its own telephone number and mailing address for customers with questions about the filings (AL No. 182 and AL No. 183).

Winterhaven has indicated that they have not received any questions, comments or protests from customers regarding this notice, nor have they received any comments which have been forwarded to them by the Commission.

### **Discussion**

Resolution No. T-9597, dated March 22, 1977, authorizes the Executive Director to grant authority to withdraw communications utility services for which there are no customers or requests for service.

TD has reviewed and analyzed the tariff changes requested by Winterhaven in Advice Letter No. 182, the notification letter dated June 28, 2006 which Winterhaven sent to its current VMS customers, as well as the tariff change requested in AL No. 183. TD finds that Winterhaven's request to withdraw this service is just and reasonable. TD also concludes that Winterhaven's customers have been well informed of the proposed withdrawal of the old VMS and well informed of the addition of the new VMS offering including its new available features. The existing customers of Winterhaven's old VMS will be charged the same monthly rate for the new VMS and will also have two new features available to them for an additional monthly expense. The switch of the existing customers from the old VMS to the new VMS will be seamless.

Therefore, Winterhaven's request for authority to revise Schedule Cal. P.U.C. No. A-24 to withdraw its old VMS, to be effective on August 4, 2006, is just and reasonable.

Commission approval of TD's recommendations is based on the specifics of this Advice Letter and its associated tariff sheets, and does not establish a precedent for the contents of future filings or for Commission approval of similar requests.

### **Findings**

1. Winterhaven requests authority to revise its Schedule Cal. P.U.C. No. A-24, to withdraw its Voice Mail System (VMS) due to the service scheduled to become obsolete by the manufacturer resulting in replacement parts becoming only limitedly availability.
2. Winterhaven's equipment vendor, SS8 Networks, will also be withdrawing support for parts, technical assistance and repair of equipment which are needed to continue to provide this service.
3. Winterhaven has provided TD staff a December 2004 notice from the equipment vendor SS8 Networks, which informed Winterhaven that SS8's VMS (Series 6 software version 6.3) was scheduled to begin being phased out effective December 31, 2004, with total support ending on December 31, 2009.

4. Winterhaven notified its VMS customers on June 28, 2006, that the old VMS would be withdrawn and replaced with a new VMS offering additional features.
5. Winterhaven has not received any comments or protests from any parties or from its customers.
6. Winterhaven is requesting an effective date of August 4, 2006 for the withdrawal of its VMS. On August 4, 2006, customers of the old VMS will be switched to the new VMS at the same rates, and at the same time the old VMS will be withdrawn.

**THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:**

1. Winterhaven is granted authority to revise its Schedules Cal. P.U.C. No. A-24 to withdraw Voice Mail System (VMS) tariff offering contained in Winterhaven California Inc.'s Advice Letter No. 182 filed on June 30, 2006.
2. Advice Letter No. 182 of Winterhaven and accompanying tariff sheets shall be marked to show that they were authorized by California Public Utilities Commission Resolution No. T-17049, with an effective date of August 4, 2006.
3. Winterhaven's Voice Mail System shall be withdrawn effective August 4, 2006.

This Resolution is effective on August 4, 2006.

I hereby certify that this Resolution was adopted by Executive Action Resolution on July 25, 2006.

/s/ STEVE LARSON

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STEVE LARSON  
Executive Director