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**FILED**

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R2406012

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

Order Instituting Rulemaking  
Proceeding to Consider Changes to  
the Commission's Carrier of Last  
Resort Rules.

Rulemaking 24-06-012

**ASSIGNED COMMISSIONER'S SCOPING MEMO AND RULING**

This Scoping Memo and Ruling sets forth the issues, need for hearing, schedule, category, and other matters necessary to scope this proceeding pursuant to Public Utilities (Pub. Util.) Code Section 1701.1 and Article 7 of the California Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules).

**1. Procedural Background**

On June 20, 2024, the Commission adopted an Order Instituting Rulemaking (OIR) to consider changes to the Commission's Carrier of Last Resort rules adopted in Decision (D.) 96-10-066 and affirmed in D.12-12-038.

Assembly Bill (AB) 3643, enacted in 1994, directed the Commission to initiate a proceeding to ensure universal telecommunications service includes "[e]ssential telecommunications services" that are "provided at affordable prices to all Californians regardless of linguistic, cultural, ethnic, physical, geographic, or income considerations."<sup>1</sup>

In D.95-07-050, the Commission proposed that each of the incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (LECs) be designated the Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) in

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<sup>1</sup> Stats. 1994, Ch. 278 (Polanco and Moore)

their respective service areas until such time that another carrier or carriers are designated to be COLRs in those areas. The definition of a COLR is “[a] local exchange service provider that stands ready to provide basic service to any customer requesting such service within a specified area” and meets other Commission-approved qualifications.<sup>2</sup> The Commission adopted rules on COLR obligations (COLR Rules) in D.96-10-066, emphasizing that the COLR concept “is important to universal service policy because it ensures that customers receive service.”<sup>3</sup> D.96-10-066 designated each of the incumbent LECs listed in its Attachment A as the COLR in their respective service areas (also called geographic study areas, or GSAs) at least until such time that another carrier or carriers are designated as the COLR in those areas.<sup>4</sup> D.12-12-038 affirmed the Commission’s COLR Rules and revised the elements of basic service.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> D.96-10-066 at 109. Residential Basic Telephone Service, or “basic service” currently involves at a minimum, that nine service elements must be offered on a nondiscriminatory basis by any carrier providing within California, including Lifeline rates for eligible customers, free access to 9-1-1, Telephone Relay Service, and directory and operator services. Any carrier may use any technology to satisfy any obligation to provide basic service. Available as of this writing at: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/broadband-mapping-program/broadband-public-feedback/basic-service-definition>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, at 193.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, at 163.

<sup>5</sup> *See*, D.12-12-038 at Appendix A. The elements of basic service include the following:

- Offering customers the ability to place and receive voice-grade calls over all distances utilizing the public switched telephone network or successor network;
- Free access to 9-1-1/Enhanced (E) 9-1-1 service;
- Access to directory services;
- Billing Provisions;
- Access to 800 and 8YY Toll-Free Services;
- Access to Telephone Relay Service as provided for in Pub. Util. Code, § 2881;
- Free access to customer service for information about Universal Lifeline Telephone Service (ULTS) service activation, service termination, service repair and bill inquiries;
- One-time free blocking for information services, and one-time billing adjustments for charges incurred inadvertently, mistakenly, or without authorization; and
- Access to operator services.

The COLR Rules require a designated COLR to serve all customers upon request, both residential and business, who are located within the COLR's designated service area, including high-cost GSAs.<sup>6</sup>

The COLR Rules also allow competitive local exchange carriers to apply to become a designated COLR or to compete in a GSA without being designated a COLR.<sup>7</sup> The Commission's COLR Rules provide that a designated COLR retains its obligations until another carrier is designated.<sup>8</sup>

The Commission's COLR Rules also include a procedure to replace the last remaining COLR.<sup>9</sup> Appendix B of D.96-10-066 contains the Commission's Universal Service Rules, including 6.D.1, which designates all incumbent LECs listed in Attachment A as the COLR in all their respective service areas at least until such time that another carrier or carriers are designated as the COLR,<sup>10</sup> and Rule 6.D.7, which allows a designated COLR to opt out of its obligations by advice letter unless it is the only carrier remaining in the service territory in which case it must file an application to withdraw as the COLR, and continue to act as the COLR until an application to withdraw is granted or a new COLR has been designated as a result of an auction.<sup>11</sup>

Under Appendix C, Section 6(c) in D.12-12-038 and Appendix B, 6.D.7 and all of 6.E. in D.96-10-066, the Commission may grant a COLR withdrawal application in one of two ways: (a) another carrier is identified and is willing to

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<sup>6</sup> D.96-10-06, at Appendix B, Adopted Universal Service Rules 6.D.5.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*, at Appendix B, Adopted Universal Service Rules 6.D.2.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*, at Appendix B, Adopted Universal Service Rules, 6.D.6a.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*, at Appendix B, Adopted Universal Service Rules, 6.D.7 and 6.E.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*, Adopted Universal Service Rules, 6.D.6a.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*, at Appendix B, Adopted Universal Service Rules, 6.D.7 and 6.E.

serve as a COLR or (b) a reverse auction is held, and the result is another carrier comes forward and is willing (and able) to serve as a COLR. If no replacement COLR is identified in the application or if a replacement COLR does not come forward once the application has been filed, the Commission must hold a reverse auction.<sup>12</sup> If no replacement carrier is identified in the reverse auction process, then the Commission must deny the COLR withdrawal application under current rules.

The adopted OIR allowed parties to file three documents: an Initial Proposal that must be filed and served by September 30, 2024; Reply Comments to initial proposals that are filed and served by October 30, 2024; and Revisions to initial proposals, that parties filed and served by December 6, 2024.

A prehearing conference (PHC) was held on December 13, 2024, to address the issues of law and fact, determine the need for hearing, set the schedule for resolving the matter, and address other matters as necessary. After considering the parties' filings and the discussion at the prehearing conference, I have determined the issues and initial schedule of the proceeding to be set forth in this scoping memo.

## **2. Issues**

The scope of issues in the proceeding is set forth below, in accordance with Rule 7.1(d). In general, the purpose of this proceeding is to consider whether the Commission should revise its COLR Rules and, if yes, what those revisions should be. The issues to be determined or otherwise considered are:

1. What communications needs or activities still require COLR service?

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<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

2. Current COLR service requirements are technology neutral, meaning a COLR must offer basic service to any resident in its service territory that requests it, but may determine what technology to use to provide that service. Should the Commission revise this standard of technology neutrality? If yes, what parameters should be used to determine whether a COLR satisfies the requirement to provide a voice grade connection irrespective of the underlying technology?
3. Should the Commission revise the requirements of basic service? If yes, which requirements or elements should be revised, and how?
  - a. Should the requirements of basic service be different, depending on the technology used to deliver service?
  - b. Are there elements of basic service that are not technology neutral? If so, are there changes that could make those elements technology-neutral?
4. Should the Commission revise its processes for allowing withdrawal of COLR obligations? Under what conditions should the Commission allow a COLR to withdraw? Can the Commission grant a COLR withdrawal while still requiring other discrete common carrier obligations?
5. As part of this proceeding, should the Commission de-designate certain areas that currently are in a COLR's service territory, from requiring a COLR? What are those areas?<sup>13</sup> What conditions must be met for the Commission to do so?
6. When should a COLR seeking to withdraw be required to notify residents in the COLR territory of its request to withdraw? What should be included in the contents of that notification? What method(s) should be used for notification?

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<sup>13</sup> For example, AT&T opines that uninhabited census blocks should not require a COLR. *See*, AT&T, Opening Comments, filed September 30, 2024, at 30-31.

7. If a COLR applies to withdraw, and a new COLR is designated, is there a need for a customer transition period? If yes, how long should that transition period last? What customer service protections, if any, should the Commission impose as part of a customer transition period? What other elements or processes, other than customer protections, should be provided in a customer transition period? How long should a customer transition period last?
8. With regard to impacts on environmental and social justice communities, and the achievement of the goals in the Commission's Environmental and Social Justice Action Plan, how should the Commission ensure that the prohibition on redlining affirmed in D.95-12-057 and D.95-07-056 applies to providers who may no longer serve as a COLR in a particular area, in accordance with Goal 3.4?

Based on feedback from parties in filings and at the PHC, several issues in the adopted OIR are not in the scope of this proceeding. Topics related to the California High-Cost Fund B are better addressed after adopting revised COLR service obligations, in either Phase 2 of this proceeding, or a separate rulemaking.

Given the disagreement among parties regarding whether there is a role for broadband in the scope of this proceeding, this Scoping Memo and Ruling clarifies that the role of broadband is in the scope of this proceeding. It seems appropriate, given the current state of the market, to consider broadband availability when evaluating COLR withdrawal.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, current COLR

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<sup>14</sup> Several parties have raised the presence of providers offering broadband service as a factor for Commission consideration as part of this proceeding, as a condition for relieving COLR obligations. Response of USTELECOM – The Broadband Association on the Order Instituting Rulemaking Proceeding to Consider Changes to Carrier of Last Resort Rules, filed September 30, 2024, at 5: “Once these broadband networks (networks funded by Broadband Equity and

*Footnote continued on next page.*

rules are technology neutral and voice services may be provisioned using broadband, including VoIP service. Thus, broadband service is relevant to the subject of COLR rules.

### **3. Need for Evidentiary Hearing**

The adopted OIR preliminarily determined that an evidentiary hearing is necessary.<sup>15</sup> Based on a review of parties' filings, as well as the discussion at the PHC, the need for evidentiary hearing may depend on the direction of proposed revisions to the Commission's COLR Rules. For now, this Scoping Memo and Ruling determines that an evidentiary hearing is not necessary. Parties requesting an evidentiary hearing must file two sets of documents, if they wish to request hearings. First, any party seeking an evidentiary hearing shall submit a motion for evidentiary hearing no later than 30 days after the Staff Proposal

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Deployment Program grants) are deployed, consumers can use them for voice services, thereby negating the need for POTS service." Response of Frontier, filed September 30, 2024, at 3: "Frontier does not have a specific proposal for how to identify areas with sufficient competition to lift COLR obligations, but Frontier observes that where there is a wireline competitor with substantial coverage of an ILEC's footprint and the same area has broadband access to each of the three major wireless carriers' service platforms, these conditions present an easy case for COLR relief. Using this standard, there would be many areas of Frontier's footprint where Frontier should not be saddled with COLR obligations. Frontier will evaluate the proposals from other parties regarding the trigger eliminating COLR obligations and offer additional perspectives in reply comments." *See also*, Opening Comments of Consolidated Communications of California Company (U 1015 C) on Order Instituting Rulemaking Proceeding to Consider Changes to the Commission's Carrier of Last Resort Rules, filed September 30, 2024, Attachment A, at 5. Initial Proposal of the Public Advocates Office on the Order Instituting Rulemaking Proceeding to Consider Changes to the Commission's Carrier of Last Resort Rules, filed September 30, 2024, at 55: "The COLR's service area must have alternative communication providers (a minimum determined by the Commission based on Cal Advocates' recommendations in Section III.B., Technology Transition: Evaluating Need for a COLR) that offer broadband service at a minimum of 100/20 Mbps and emergency services in that area (voice and broadband, 911), and the service quality standards described above (revised GO 133-D)..."

<sup>15</sup> OIR at 7.

contemplated in Section 4 is issued. All motions for evidentiary hearing shall include the following:

A) Any disputed issue of material fact that must be resolved through an evidentiary hearing. Each issue shall be stated separately.

B) For each issue, how the moving party asserts the hearing will address the issue. Such submission shall summarize the evidence to be presented and the witness(es) to testify.

Any right that a party may otherwise have to an evidentiary hearing will be waived if the party does not submit a timely motion requesting an evidentiary hearing that contains the material in A) and B) above.

**4. Schedule**

The following schedule is adopted here and may be modified by the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) as required to promote the efficient and fair resolution of the rulemaking:

Event	Date
Party Meet and Confer Sessions	Once per month, February 2025-June 2025
In-person and remote Public Participation Hearings	April through June 2025
Workshops	March - June 2025
Post-Workshop Comments, filed and served	TBD
Post-Workshop Reply Comments, filed and served	TBD
Parties' Joint Stipulations	June 30, 2025
Staff Proposal	Q3



Deadline for Motions for Evidentiary Hearing	30 days after Staff Proposal issued
Opening Comments on Staff Proposal, filed and served	30 days after Staff Proposal issued
Reply Comments on Staff Proposal, filed and served [ <i>matter submitted</i> ]	15 days after Opening Comments filed and served
Evidentiary hearing	To be determined
Opening Briefs/Reply Briefs	To be determined, if needed
Proposed decision	<i>[no later than 90 days after submission]</i>
Commission decision	<i>[no sooner than 30 days after PD]</i>

Parties shall schedule monthly meet-and-confer sessions for February 2025 through June 2025. AT&T California and the Commission’s Public Advocates Office shall rotate organizing these monthly meetings. The purpose of these monthly meetings is to develop Parties’ Joint Stipulations on policy proposals that all parties believe the Commission should adopt as part of this proceeding.

The assigned ALJ will issue a separate ruling noticing the workshops and public participation hearings listed above.

The proceeding will stand submitted upon the filing of Reply Comments in response to the Staff Proposal unless the assigned ALJ requires further evidence or argument. Based on this schedule, even excluding evidentiary hearings, the proceeding likely will not be resolved within 18 months as required by Pub. Util. Code Section 1701.5. It will take 24 months to allow for workshops, extensive public feedback, the development of a Staff Proposal, party filings, as well as sufficient time to consider all of this material. Thus, the deadline for this proceeding is set for June 20, 2026.

## **5. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program and Settlements**

The Commission's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program offers mediation, early neutral evaluation, and facilitation services, and uses ALJs who have been trained as neutrals. At the parties' request, the assigned ALJ can refer this proceeding to the Commission's ADR Coordinator. Additional ADR information is available on the Commission's website.<sup>16</sup>

Any settlement between parties, whether regarding all or some of the issues, shall comply with Article 12 of the Rules and shall be served in writing. Such settlements shall include a complete explanation of the settlement and a complete explanation of why it is reasonable in light of the whole record, consistent with the law and in the public interest. The proposing parties bear the burden of proof as to whether the settlement should be adopted by the Commission.

At the PHC, AT&T recommended the Commission use a neutral arbiter to moderate party workshops. That recommendation is not being treated as a request for ADR. Additionally, it should be noted that workshop facilitation is not the standard role of an ADR neutral.

## **6. Category of Proceeding and Ex Parte Restrictions**

This Scoping Memo and Ruling confirms the Commission's preliminary determination that this is a ratesetting proceeding.<sup>17</sup>

Consolidated Communications, the TDS Companies, and the Independent Small LECs object to the ratesetting categorization and assert instead that the

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<sup>16</sup> As of this writing at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/adr/>

<sup>17</sup> OIR at 6.

proceeding should be categorized as quasi-legislative.<sup>18</sup> These parties cite the Commission's Rules, which define both ratesetting proceedings and quasi-legislative proceedings,<sup>19</sup> arguing that based on these definitions, this proceeding should be recategorized as quasi-legislative. These parties opine that potential changes to basic service requirements or impacts on the collection and expenditure of ratepayer monies, such as California High-Cost Fund B subsidies, are "incidental" to the primary issues in the initial scope of this proceeding, which are predominantly legislative in nature. The California Broadband & Video Association agrees with recategorizing this proceeding to quasi-legislative, adding that a quasi-legislative categorization would facilitate efficient collaboration and information-sharing and would support the Commission's efforts to resolve the scoped issues in this rulemaking.<sup>20</sup> At the prehearing conference, other industry parties, such as AT&T, expressed agreement.

Other parties agree with the initial categorization. The Utility Reform Network (TURN), the Communications Workers of America (CWA), District 9, and Center for Accessible Technology (CforAT), collectively filing as "Joint

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<sup>18</sup> Consolidated Communications, Opening Comments, filed September 30, 2024, at 10-11. The Small LECs, Opening Comments, filed September 30, 2024, at 4-5. The TDS Companies, Opening Comments, filed September 30, 2024, at 4-5.

<sup>19</sup> Rule 1.3 (f) defines "Quasi-legislative proceedings" as "proceedings that establish policy or rules (including generic ratemaking policy or rules) affecting a class of regulated entities, including those proceedings in which the Commission investigates rates or practices for an entire regulated industry or class of entities within the industry, even if those proceedings have an incidental effect on ratepayer costs."

Rule 1.3 (g) defines "Ratesetting proceedings" as "proceedings in which the Commission sets or investigates rates for a specifically named utility (or utilities) or establishes a mechanism that in turn sets the rates for a specifically named utility (or utilities). Ratesetting proceedings include complaints that challenge the reasonableness of rates or charges, past, present, or future. Other proceedings may be categorized as ratesetting, as described in Rule 7.1(e)(2)."

<sup>20</sup> The California Broadband & Video Association, Reply Comments, at 8-10.

Commenters,” contend that ratemaking concerns in the initial scope of this proceeding are not incidental to this proceeding, and the preliminary scope implicates them in ways other than potential changes to the California High-Cost Fund B, including the obligation for COLRs to participate in California LifeLine and other rate-related obligations.<sup>21</sup> Cal Advocates agrees.<sup>22</sup>

Joint Commenters and Cal Advocates also note that the ratesetting categorization triggers stricter ex parte reporting and disclosure rules, arguing that given the breadth and potential impact of this proceeding and the number of parties already participating, reporting requirements will create transparency and facilitate party participation by encouraging stakeholders to seek ex parte meetings on important issues.<sup>23</sup>

While there may be both ratesetting and quasi-legislative issues in the scope of this proceeding, as well as some issues that may not fit neatly into either of these categories, under Rule 7.1 (e)(2), the default categorization for proceedings such as this one is ratesetting:

When a proceeding does not clearly fit into any of the categories as defined in Rules 1.3(a), (b), (f) and (g), the proceeding will be conducted under the rules applicable to the ratesetting category unless and until the Commission determines that the rules applicable to one of the other categories, or some hybrid of the rules, are best suited to the proceeding.

This was the rationale used to categorize Investigation 15-11-007, the Order Instituting Investigation into the State of Competition Among Telecommunications Providers in California, and to Consider and Resolve

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<sup>21</sup> Joint Commenters, Reply Comments, at 49-50.

<sup>22</sup> Cal Advocates, Reply Comments, at 47.

<sup>23</sup> Joint Commenters, Reply Comments, at 50. Cal Advocates, Reply Comments, at 47.

Questions raised in the Limited Rehearing of D.08-09-042. The same rationale is appropriate for categorizing this proceeding.

Moreover, while the California Broadband & Video Association is correct that quasi-legislative proceedings require other types of engagement activities, such as Staff Proposals, party workshops, and public engagement workshops,<sup>24,25</sup> a ratesetting proceeding may also include those same activities. Indeed, as noted in Section 4, this proceeding will include all of these engagement activities, as well as others designed to foster collaboration among parties.

The scope of issues in this proceeding warrants the ratesetting categorization. Thus, this Scoping Memo and Ruling overrules the objections of Consolidated Communications and the Small LECs.

Accordingly, ex parte communications are restricted and must be reported pursuant to Article 8 of the Rules.

## **7. Request of the Independent Small LECs Regarding Participation**

In filings, the Independent Small LECs, as a subgroup of the Small LECs,<sup>26</sup> request the Commission permit these carriers to “modulate their participation to

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<sup>24</sup> The California Broadband & Video Association, Reply Comments, at 9.

<sup>25</sup> Rule 7.5(a)(2) of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure requires for quasi-legislative proceedings that the Commission host “[a]t least one workshop providing an opportunity for the parties to the proceeding to have an interactive discussion on issues identified in the scoping memo...”

<sup>26</sup> The Small LECs consist of following thirteen small Local Exchange Carriers: Kerman Telephone Co., Foresthill Telephone Co., Hornitos Telephone Company, Pinnacles Telephone Co., Volcano Telephone Company, Winterhaven Telephone Company, Happy Valley Telephone Company, Sierra Telephone Company, Inc., The Siskiyou Telephone Company, The Ponderosa Telephone Co., Calaveras Telephone Company, Cal-Ore Telephone Co., and Ducor Telephone Company. The Independent Small LECs are the Small LECs except for the TDS Companies. The Independent Small LECs are: Kerman Telephone Co., Calaveras Telephone Company, Cal-Ore Telephone Co., The Ponderosa Telephone Co., Sierra Telephone Company, Inc., The Siskiyou Telephone Company, Volcano Telephone Company, Ducor Telephone

*Footnote continued on next page.*

reflect their fundamental differences with larger providers who may be pursuing broader changes to the COLR rules..."<sup>27</sup> and "look for opportunities to limit the ... [the Independent Small LECs'] participation to avoid the imposition of unjustified and unrecoverable regulatory costs."<sup>28</sup> The Independent Small LECs contend this proceeding has very limited relevance to these carriers, as they do not intend to pursue COLR relief. Moreover, the Independent Small LECs all participate in the California High Cost Fund A (CHCF-A) Program, which mandates the retention of COLR status as a prerequisite to receiving CHCF-A support.<sup>29</sup> At the PHC the Independent Small LECs requested that they be de-designated as respondents in this proceeding. Based on the arguments discussed above, this request is granted. The Independent Small LECs are on notice, however, that any COLR rules affecting Independent Small LECs that the Commission adopts in this proceeding will apply to the Independent Small LECs regardless of whether or how they choose to participate in this proceeding.

## **8. Public Outreach**

Pursuant to Pub. Util. Code Section 1711(a), where feasible and appropriate, before determining the scope of the proceeding, the Commission sought the participation of those likely to be affected, including those likely to derive benefit from, and those potentially subject to, a decision in this proceeding. This matter was noticed on the Commission's daily calendar. Where

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Company, Foresthill Telephone Co., Pinnacles Telephone Co. The TDS companies are: Hornitos Telephone Company, Winterhaven Telephone Company, and Happy Valley Telephone Company. The TDS Companies do not receive California High Cost Fund A (CHCF-A) Program support.

<sup>27</sup> The Independent Small LECs, Amended Opening Comments, filed October 3, 2024, at 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*, at 11.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*, at 1.

feasible and appropriate, this matter was incorporated into engagements conducted by the Commission's External Affairs Division with local governments and other interested parties.

In the interest of broad notice, the adopted OIR was served on the official service lists for Rulemakings (R.) 22-03-016 and R.20-02-008. The Commission additionally served the adopted OIR on a number of municipal and county officials and organizations that were listed in Appendix A of the adopted OIR. Separate service was provided to the list of Tribes maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission.

The adopted OIR names all COLRs in California as respondents and encourages participation from cable companies that offer voice service, such as Comcast, Charter, and Cox Communications, as well as the participation of mobile voice providers, such as AT&T Mobility, Verizon, and T-Mobile.<sup>30</sup>

## **9. Intervenor Compensation**

Pursuant to Pub. Util. Code Section 1804(a)(1), and the adopted OIR, a customer who intends to seek an award of compensation must have filed and served a notice of intent to claim compensation by no later than 30 days after the issuance date of the OIR,<sup>31</sup> or July 30, 2024.

## **10. Response to Public Comments**

Parties may, but are not required to, respond to written comments received from the public. Parties may do so by posting such response using the "Add Public Comment" button on the "Public Comment" tab of the online docket card for the proceeding.

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<sup>30</sup> OIR at 8.

<sup>31</sup> OIR at 10.

## **11. Public Advisor**

Any person interested in participating in this proceeding who is unfamiliar with the Commission's procedures or has questions about the electronic filing procedures is encouraged to obtain more information at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/about-cpuc/divisions/news-and-public-information-office/public-advisors-office> or contact the Commission's Public Advisor at 866-849-8390 or 866-836-7825 (TTY), or send an email to [public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov).

## **12. Filing, Service, and Service List**

The official service list has been created and is on the Commission's website. Parties should confirm that their information on the service list is correct and serve notice of any errors on the Commission's Process Office, the Service List, and the ALJ. Interested individuals or organizations may become a party pursuant to Rule 1.4.<sup>32</sup>

When serving any document, each party must ensure that it is using the current official service list on the Commission's website.

This proceeding will follow the electronic service protocol set forth in Rule 1.10. All parties to this proceeding shall serve documents and pleadings using electronic mail, whenever possible, transmitted no later than 5:00 p.m., on the date scheduled for service to occur. The service of paper copies is discouraged and will only be required under circumstances specified by the assigned ALJ.

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<sup>32</sup> The form to request additions and changes to the Service list may be found at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/administrative-law-judge-division/documents/additiontoservicelisttranscriptordercompliant.pdf>



When serving documents on Commissioners or their personal advisors, whether or not they are on the official service list, parties must only provide electronic service. Parties must not send hard copies of documents to Commissioners or their personal advisors unless specifically instructed to do so.

Persons who are not parties but wish to receive electronic service of documents filed in the proceeding may contact the Process Office at [process\\_office@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:process_office@cpuc.ca.gov) to request addition to the “Information Only” category of the official service list pursuant to Rule 1.9(f).

The Commission encourages those who seek information-only status on the service list to consider the Commission’s subscription service as an alternative. The subscription service sends individual notifications to each subscriber of formal e-filings tendered and accepted by the Commission. Notices sent through subscription service are less likely to be flagged by spam or other filters. Notifications can be for a specific proceeding, a range of documents and daily or weekly digests.

**13. Receiving Electronic Service from the Commission**

Parties and other persons on the service list are advised that it is the responsibility of each person or entity on the service list for Commission proceedings to ensure their ability to receive emails from the Commission. Please add “@cpuc.ca.gov” to your email safe sender list and update your email screening practices, settings and filters to ensure receipt of emails from the Commission.

**14. Assignment of Proceeding**

John Reynolds is the assigned commissioner and Thomas J. Glegola is the assigned ALJ and presiding officer for the proceeding.

**IT IS RULED** that:

1. The scope of this proceeding is described above and is adopted.
2. The schedule of this proceeding is set forth above and is adopted.
3. The following carriers are de-designated as respondents: Kerman Telephone Co., Calaveras Telephone Company, Cal-Ore Telephone Co., The Ponderosa Telephone Co., Sierra Telephone Company, Inc., The Siskiyou Telephone Company, Volcano Telephone Company, Ducor Telephone Company, Foresthill Telephone Co., Pinnacles Telephone Co.
4. The presiding officer is Administrative Law Judge Thomas J. Glegola.
5. The category of the proceeding is ratesetting.

Dated February 4, 2025, at San Francisco, California.

/s/ JOHN REYNOLDS

John Reynolds  
Assigned Commissioner