

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

505 VAN NESS AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298

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TO PARTIES OF RECORD IN RULEMAKING 20-02-008:

This is the proposed decision of Commissioner Alice Reynolds. Until and unless the Commission hears the item and votes to approve it, the proposed decision has no legal effect. This item may be heard, at the earliest, at the Commission's **11/20/2025** Business Meeting. To confirm when the item will be heard, please see the Business Meeting agenda, which is posted on the Commission's website 10 days before each Business Meeting.

Parties to the proceeding may file comments on the proposed decision as provided in Rule 14.3 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. Electronic copies of comments should also be sent to the Intervenor Compensation Program at icompcoordinator@cpuc.ca.gov.

/s/ MICHELLE COOKE

Michelle Cooke

Chief Administrative Law Judge

MLC:smt

Attachment

Decision **PROPOSED DECISION OF COMMISSIONER ALICE REYNOLDS**
Mailed 10/15/2025)

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Order Instituting Rulemaking to
Update the California Universal
Telephone Service (California LifeLine)
Program.

Rulemaking 20-02-008

**DECISION ADOPTING GENERAL ORDER 153-A
AND RESOLVING PROCEEDING ISSUES****Summary**

This decision adopts General Order (GO) 153-A, which incorporates substantive revisions that reflect changes authorized by the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) in previous decisions, as well as non-substantive revisions. GO 153-A supersedes GO 153. The specific revisions to GO 153 adopted by this decision are reflected in Appendix A to this decision.

This decision also resolves the proceeding's issues except for the application for rehearing filed by Pacific Bell Telephone Company d/b/a AT&T California (AT&T) on October 6, 2025, and claims for intervenor compensation. Since the Commission opened this Order Instituting Rulemaking (R.) 20-02-008 on February 27, 2020, it has issued numerous decisions updating the California Universal Telephone Service Program (California LifeLine). These decisions

include launching a Foster Youth Program,¹ establishing subsidies and standards for California LifeLine and authorizing replacement of federal support for wireline participants,² and, recently, approving a Home Broadband Pilot.³ Although the Commission may want to examine other issues, such as an update to the methodology for calculating specific support amounts, the statutory deadline for this proceeding is December 31, 2025.⁴ To enable the Commission to consider these issues in a subsequent rulemaking with a new statutory deadline, this decision resolves the proceeding's issues for all purposes except for the application for rehearing filed by AT&T and claims for intervenor compensation.

1. Background

The Moore Universal Telephone Service Act (Moore Act) established the California Universal Telephone Service Program (California LifeLine).⁵ On November 7, 1984, the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) issued Decision (D.) 84-11-028 adopting General Order (GO) 153 to implement the Moore Act.⁶ The Commission has revised GO 153 multiple times, most recently in D.21-09-023, which was issued on September 24, 2021.⁷

¹ See generally Decision (D.) 24-05-003 (establishing California LifeLine Foster Youth Long-Term Program and Pilot Program).

² See generally D.20-10-006 (establishing specific support amounts and minimum standards for California LifeLine and authorizing replacement of federal support for wireline participants).

³ See generally D.25-08-050 (approving Home Broadband Pilot).

⁴ D.24-12-020 at 3.

⁵ Pub. Util. Code §§ 871, *et seq.*

⁶ D.84-11-028 at 4 (ordering that Appendix B is adopted as general order of Commission).

⁷ D.21-09-023 at Ordering Paragraphs (OP) 1, 2; see also Resolution T-17321, issued July 18, 2011 (revising GO 153 in accordance with D.10-11-033); Resolution T-17202, issued April 16, 2009 (revising GO 153 in accordance with D.08-08-029); Resolution T-16996, issued March 6, 2006 (revising GO 153 in accordance with D.05-12-013); Resolution T-16591, issued February 21, 2002 (revising GO 153 in accordance with D.00-10-028).

Since 2021, the Commission has adopted several decisions that necessitate changes to GO 153. D.22-05-014 eliminated the use of a Commission-issued personal identification number (PIN) in the California LifeLine renewal process to comply with Assembly Bill (AB) 74 and Public Utilities Code (Pub. Util. Code) Section 878.6(a).⁸ D.22-10-021 adopted a new surcharge mechanism to fund California's Universal Service Public Purpose Programs (PPPs), such as California LifeLine. While D.22-10-021 did not specifically reference GO 153, the new surcharge reporting and remittance requirements impact GO 153.⁹ D.23-06-003 adopted changes to GO 153, Section 1.4 and Appendix C that are not yet reflected in the general order.¹⁰

Additionally, D.24-11-003 established the licensing and registration framework for interconnected fixed Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providers. All fixed VoIP providers offering voice services in California are required to obtain a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN).¹¹ Finally, Resolution T-17889 incorporated the federal Lifeline recertification requirements into the California LifeLine renewal process. Subscribers who are not found in any eligibility database during renewal must submit a renewal form with supporting documentation.¹² Aligning the California LifeLine renewal requirements with the federal requirements strengthens program integrity and ensures both the federal and California LifeLine subscribers undergo the same renewal process.

⁸ D.22-05-014 at Conclusion of Law 3.

⁹ D.22-10-021 at OP 6, 9.

¹⁰ D.23-06-003 at OP 1.

¹¹ D.24-11-003 at OP 1.

¹² Resolution T-17889 at OP 2.

Separately, the Communications Division staff conducted a comprehensive review of GO 153 to determine if further changes to GO 153 are necessary. Through that review, the Communications Division staff identified additional substantive changes to GO 153 that are necessary to ensure consistency with other Commission decisions, D.20-10-006 and D.05-12-013. Staff also identified necessary non-substantive changes, such as updating website addresses.

1.1. Submission Date

This matter was submitted on June 9, 2023, following the issuance of D.23-06-003, which adopted specific changes to GO 153.

2. Issues Before the Commission

This decision addresses only one issue: whether to adopt GO 153-A, as reflected in Appendix A to this decision.

3. Discussion

Since GO 153 was last revised, the Commission has adopted several decisions and a resolution that necessitate substantive changes to GO 153: D.24-11-003; D.23-06-003; D.22-10-021; D.22-05-013; and Resolution T-17889. Additionally, the Communications Division staff identified additional substantive changes to GO 153 that are necessitated by D.20-10-006 and D.05-12-013 but have not yet been incorporated into the general order. Staff also identified non-substantive changes, such as updating website addresses.

Each decision that necessitates a substantive change and the revisions to GO 153 are summarized below:

- D.24-11-003: In this decision, the Commission established the licensing and registration framework for interconnected VoIP providers. Specifically, all fixed VoIP providers offering voice services in California are required to obtain a CPCN. Sections 2.36, 3.4.3, 7.2, and Appendix B in GO-153 have been revised to incorporate the CPCN

requirement for fixed VoIP providers seeking to participate in the California LifeLine program.

- D.23-06-003: In this decision, the Commission adopted changes to GO 153, Section 1.4 and Appendix C. The changes reflect developments to California LifeLine after December 1, 2021, and subsidies for service plans that received Affordable Connectivity Program discounts.
- D.22-10-021: In this decision, the Commission adopted a new surcharge mechanism to fund California's Universal Service PPPs, such as California LifeLine. Specifically, the Commission ordered all telephone corporations, including traditional wireline, wireless, and VoIP carriers or providers, to implement the new access line flat-rate surcharge collection and remittance mechanism beginning April 1, 2023.¹³ Additionally, the Commission ordered all telephone corporations to report their access line data in the new Telecommunications and User Fee Filing System portal.¹⁴ These changes are incorporated into Sections 2 and 11 of GO 153-A, as shown in Appendix A.
- D.22-05-014: In this decision, the Commission eliminated the use of a Commission-issued PIN in the renewal process to comply with AB 74 and Pub. Util. Code Section 878.6(a). Section 12.2 of GO 153-A, as shown in Appendix A, has been revised to remove references to the PIN.
- D.20-10-006: In this decision, the Commission adopted changes to GO 153 to eliminate subsidies for measured rate plans effective December 1, 2020, including the Specific Support Amounts and associated lost revenues and costs for untimed calls.¹⁵ Although the Commission subsequently updated GO 153 in D.21-09-023, the revised GO 153 did not delete all references to measured rate plans. As such, the changes authorized in D.20-10-006 are

¹³ D.22-10-021 at OP 6.

¹⁴ *Id.* at OP 9.

¹⁵ D.20-10-006 at OP 3.

incorporated into GO 153-A, as shown in Appendix A. Specifically, Sections 2.35 and 9.4.12 are deleted, and Section 9.3.4.1 is revised to delete the reference to allowable recovery of untimed calls. Appendix D is also deleted in its entirety.

- D.05-12-013: In this decision, the Commission adopted a revised version of GO 153.¹⁶ The version included the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) as one of the qualifying assistance programs for California LifeLine.¹⁷ However, the inclusion of WIC was not incorporated into GO 153. As such, WIC is included as one of the qualifying programs in Section 5.1.5.2.4 of GO 153-A, as shown in Appendix A.
- Resolution T-17889: In this resolution, the Commission incorporated the federal Lifeline recertification requirements in the California LifeLine renewal process. Subscribers who are not found in any eligibility database during the renewal must submit a renewal form and supporting documentation. Adopting the federal recertification requirements strengthens program integrity and ensures that both federal and California LifeLine subscribers undergo the same renewal process. Section 5.5, as shown in GO 153-A in Appendix A, is revised to incorporate these changes.

It is necessary to revise GO 153 to ensure consistency with Commission decisions. It is also necessary to make non-substantive revisions to ensure information in the general order is accurate. Therefore, we conclude that it is reasonable to adopt GO 153-A, as shown in Appendix A.

4. Summary of Public Comment

Rule 1.18 allows any member of the public to submit written comment in any Commission proceeding using the “Public Comment” tab of the online

¹⁶ D.05-12-013 at OP 1.

¹⁷ D.05-12-013 at Appendix A, Section 5.1.5.

Docket Card for that proceeding on the Commission's website. Rule 1.18(b) requires that relevant written comments submitted in a proceeding be summarized in the final decision issued in that proceeding.

5. Conclusion

We adopt GO 153-A, as shown in Appendix A to this decision. We also resolve the proceeding's issues for all purposes except for the application for rehearing filed by Pacific Bell Telephone Company d/b/a AT&T California (AT&T) on October 6, 2025, and claims for intervenor compensation.

6. Procedural Matters

This decision affirms all rulings made by the Administrative Law Judge and assigned Commissioner in this proceeding. All motions not ruled on are deemed denied.

7. Comments on Proposed Decision

The proposed decision of Commissioner Alice Reynolds in this matter was mailed to the parties in accordance with Section 311 of the Public Utilities Code and comments were allowed under Rule 14.3 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. Comments were filed on _____, and reply comments were filed on _____ by _____.

8. Assignment of Proceeding

Alice Reynolds is the assigned Commissioner and Robyn Purchia is the assigned Administrative Law Judge in this proceeding.

Findings of Fact

1. The Commission last revised GO 153 in D.21-09-023.
2. The Commission adopted decisions that necessitate additional revisions to GO 153. Those decisions are D.24-11-003, D.23-06-003, D.22-10-021, D.22-05-014, D.20-10-006, D.05-12-013, and Resolution T-17889.

3. Non-substantive revisions to GO 153 are necessary to ensure the information in the general order is accurate.

Conclusions of Law

1. The revisions to GO 153, which are reflected in GO 153-A in Appendix A, should be adopted.

2. All rulings made by the Administrative Law Judge and assigned Commissioner in this proceeding should be affirmed.

3. All motions not ruled on to date should be denied.

4. This proceeding's issues should be resolved for all issues, except for AT&T's application for rehearing and claims for intervenor compensation.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. General Order 153-A, as reflected in Appendix A of this decision, is adopted and modified as provided in this decision.

2. General Order 153-A shall replace General Order 153 on the Commission's website as the currently effective General Order.

3. All rulings made by the Administrative Law Judge and assigned Commissioner in this proceeding are affirmed.

4. All motions not ruled on to date are denied.

5. The proceeding remains open to consider the application for rehearing filed by Pacific Bell Telephone Company d/b/a AT&T California on October 6, 2025, and claims for intervenor compensation.

This order is effective today.

Dated _____, at San Francisco, California.