

Decision 26-04-009 April 9, 2026

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Joyce Marie Hurt, by Kathryn Romo,
Conservator of the Estate of Joyce Marie
Hurt,

Complainant,

vs.

Pacific Bell d/b/a AT&T California
(U1001C),

Defendant.

(ECP)

Case 25-10-006

DECISION DISMISSING COMPLAINT

Summary

As the requested relief has been granted, the expedited complaint is moot. The expedited complaint is dismissed.

This proceeding is closed.

1. Factual and Procedural Background

On October 8, 2025, Kathryn Romo, Conservator of the Estate of Joyce Marie Hurt (Ms. Romo or Complainant) filed the instant formal complaint, stating that AT&T Services, Inc. failed to provide Complainant with access to the account belonging to Joyce Marie Hurt and continued to bill \$2,139.17 for unused phone lines. AT&T Mobility Wireless Operations Holdings, Inc. (AT&T or

Defendant) answered the complaint on November 17, 2025. A remote hearing was held on December 10, 2025.

2. Complainant's Contentions

Ms. Romo states that she is the conservator of the Estate of Joyce Marie Hurt (Ms. Hurt).¹ Ms. Romo contends that on October 14, 2023, she sent an email to AT&T's Power of Attorney email account seeking access to Ms. Hurt's account in order to cancel her unused phone lines. Ms. Romo states that AT&T requested documentation to obtain account access and Ms. Romo provided the documentation. However, AT&T did not allow account access and told Ms. Romo to instead go to a local AT&T corporate store to verify her identity. Ms. Romo asserts that she then went to the corporate store in October 2023 and was told that no account changes could be made in the store, and that she would need to call "611" for account changes. Ms. Romo contends that she contacted AT&T's customer service line three times in October 2023 but was told that no one could access Ms. Hurt's account without a PIN number.

On May 3, 2025, Ms. Romo contends that she sent another email to AT&T seeking access to Ms. Hurt's account. On May 14, 2025, Ms. Romo states that she sent certified letters to AT&T to verify proof of conservatorship. Ms. Romo contends that she sent additional emails to AT&T regarding access to Ms. Hurt's account on May 15, June 4, and June 15, 2025. She did not receive access to the account following these communications.

¹ Complaint at 7.

Ms. Romo states she filed an informal complaint with the California Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) Consumer Affairs Branch in June 2025 and finally received a response from Darren Nielsen of AT&T's Office of the President to assist with cancelling the unused phone lines. Ms. Romo asserts that Mr. Nielsen mentioned a refund at that time, but she had not received a refund at the time she filed the instant formal complaint.

During the hearing, Ms. Romo testified that she is the granddaughter of Ms. Hurt, who is 85 years old and has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Ms. Romo states that Ms. Hurt resides in an assisted living facility. Ms. Romo testified that she was repeatedly told by AT&T that she needed Ms. Hurt's PIN number to access the account, which neither Ms. Hurt nor Ms. Romo possessed.

Ms. Romo testified that Mr. Nielsen told her he would send a nominal refund in the form of a gift card; however, Ms. Romo had not received a gift card or any monetary compensation at the time of the hearing. Ms. Romo testified that Ms. Hurt cannot use a gift card and that Ms. Romo would like the refund issued by check. Ms. Romo is seeking a refund of \$2,139.17, the amount she has paid to AT&T for the unused phone lines since Ms. Romo first submitted the requested documentation to access the account (November 2023 – April 2025 billing cycles). Ms. Romo also requests that AT&T be required to review and improve its procedures for handling account requests for court-appointed conservators.

3. Defendant's Contentions

In its answer, AT&T contends that it "has issued the refund which was requested to Ms. Hurt."² AT&T contends that it has cancelled Ms. Hurt's unused phone lines, and therefore, there is no live controversy and the complaint should be dismissed. AT&T also states that the complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

During the hearing, Defendant's representative testified that there is a requirement for a PIN number to access an account; however, the representative acknowledged that Ms. Romo should have been allowed to access Ms. Hurt's account as a conservator earlier than she did. Defendant's representative stated that a gift card of \$91 was sent to Ms. Hurt's home address. Defendant's representative stated that following the hearing, he would confirm that a refund check was sent to Ms. Romo at the correct mailing address.

On January 20, 2026, in response to the Administrative Law Judge's (ALJ) request for a status update on the refund payment, Defendant's representative responded that the refund had not been processed by December 20 as planned, due to a processing error when Ms. Romo's home address was updated. Defendant's representative responded that a check for \$2,266.75 would be issued. On January 23, 2026, Defendant's representative confirmed by email to the service list that Ms. Romo received the refund check.

² Answer at 1.

4. Discussion

The Commission first observes that it took AT&T nearly two years to grant Ms. Romo access to Ms. Hurt's account as a conservator. Complainant first contacted Defendant in October 2023 to request account access and to submit the requisite documentation. In 2023, Complainant received several conflicting directives from AT&T's representatives, which included advising her that she needed Ms. Hurt's PIN number, that she needed to visit the local corporate AT&T store, and that she needed to contact various AT&T customer service numbers. In May and June 2025, Complainant sent multiple emails to AT&T and again sent the requisite conservatorship documentation. It was not until June 2025, after Complainant filed an informal complaint with the Commission's Consumer Affairs Branch, that Ms. Romo was finally granted account access and that Ms. Hurt's unused phone lines were finally terminated.

The Commission also observes that after Ms. Romo finally received account access and Ms. Hurt's unused phone lines were terminated, it took nearly seven months before AT&T issued a refund check to Ms. Romo for the amount that was paid for the unused phone lines. The Commission shares Ms. Romo's concern regarding the significant delay in obtaining account access as a court-appointed conservator, and the further delay in obtaining a refund check for the amount paid for the unused phone lines. We encourage AT&T to evaluate how its policies for handling conservatorship situations can be improved.

As of June 2025, the unused phone lines Ms. Romo was seeking to cancel have been terminated. To date, Defendant's representative has confirmed that Ms. Romo refund check in the amount of \$2,266.75. As such, the Commission

finds that there is no live controversy at this time and the expedited complaint is hereby moot. Accordingly, the complaint is dismissed.

5. Assignment of Proceeding

Karen Douglas is the assigned Commissioner and Debbie Chiv is the assigned Administrative Law Judge and Presiding Officer in this proceeding.

6. Waiver of Comment Period

Pursuant to Rule 14.7(b), the 30-day public review and comment period required by Section 311 of the Public Utilities Code and the opportunity to file comments on the proposed decision is not applicable in Expedited Complaint Proceedings. Accordingly, this decision was placed on the Commission's agenda directly.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. As there is no live controversy at this time, the complaint is hereby moot.
2. Case 25-10-006 is dismissed.
3. Case 25-10-006 is closed.

This order is effective today.

Dated April 9, 2026, at San Francisco, California.

JOHN REYNOLDS

President

DARCIE L. HOUCK

KAREN DOUGLAS

MATTHEW BAKER

CHRISTINE HARADA

Commissioners