ALJ/RIM/smt **Date of Issuance 9/10/2026**

Decision 26-09-008 September 3, 2026

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Rasheed Ali, Complainants, vs. Frontier California Inc. (U1002C); Citizens Telecommunications Co. of Ca. d/b/a Frontier Communications of California (U1024C); Frontier Communications of America Inc. d/b/a Frontier Communications (U1548C); Frontier California (U4439C); Frontier Communications of America Inc. d/b/a Citizens Long Distance (U5429C) Defendants.	(ECP) Case 25-10-001

DECISION DENYING RELIEF AND DISMISSING COMPLAINT

Summary

This Decision denies the request relief and dismisses the complaint by Rasheed Ali on the grounds that the complainant has failed to prove that the defendant, Frontier California Inc. (U1002C) violated any rule, law, order, decision, or statute, of the California Public Utilities Commission, when it

declined to provide, without cost to the complainant, local exchange service over copper facilities to the complainant's residence.

The requested relief is denied, the case is dismissed, and the proceeding is closed.

1. Background

1.1. The Allegations

The Complainant (Rasheed Ali) resides at 2758 Reserve Street, Manteca, California. The Complainant alleges that Frontier California Inc. (U1002C) (Frontier) is the Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) for Manteca, California but has refused to provide analog copper landline service at his residence. Currently, the Complainant asserts that he is receiving service from Comcast who provides VoIP bundled with internet. The Complainant alleges that as the COLR, Frontier is legally obligated, at its cost, to switch his Comcast service to the copper landline service. Currently, there is no copper landline service for the Complainant's residence.

In its answer, Frontier denies that it is obligated to provide, at its cost, local exchange service over copper facilities to the complainant's residence. Frontier explains that when the Complainant's area in Manteca was developed between 2015-2016, the developer did not allow Frontier to participate in the joint trenching to provide services to potential customers in the area. Instead, the developer provided limited access to the primary cable provider.

Because of this historical development, Fronter claims that it advised the complainant of the two service options and costs: (1) the Complainant would have to pay Frontier for the cost of building fiber to provide local exchange service pursuant to the line extension provisions in Section 3 of Frontier's Product Guide; or (2) Frontier could provide wireless service as part of its duty to provide basic service. Frontier claims that the Complainant rejected both options and, instead, asserted that as the COLR, Frontier is obligated to provide the requested service through copper facilities. Frontier concludes by asserting that as there is nothing else that it is legally obligated to do for the Complainant service wise, the complaint should be dismissed with prejudice.

1.2. The Evidentiary Hearing and Submission

The evidentiary hearing was held on November 17th, 2025 and was also submitted on that date.

2. Jurisdiction and Burden of Proof

The Commission has jurisdiction over the activities of public utilities, including Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers designated as Carriers of Last Resort (COLR).[1] Frontier is the Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier for Manteca, California, and is, therefore, a COLR subject to the Commission's jurisdiction, control, and regulation.[2]

The Complainant is a resident in Manteca, California. The Complainant alleges that as the COLR, Frontier is obligated, at its cost, to provide local exchange serve over copper facilities to the complainant's residence. The complainant filed this ECP against Frontier pursuant to Rule 4.6 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. The Complainant alleges that

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[1] *See* Decision (D.) 95-07-050 and California Public Utility (Pub. Util.) Code § 216(a).

[2] *See* D.96-10-066, 1996 Cal.PUC LEXIS 1046 at 418, Appendix B (COL 140).

Frontier's refusal to provide such service is a violation of its obligations as a COLR.

The Complainant bears the burden of proof to show that Frontier violated a rule, order, law, or tariff approved by the Commission.[3] The complainant must meet the burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence.

3. Discussion

Because of the Complainant's allegation that Frontier is the Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) for where the complainant resides, it will be helpful to explain what services a COLR is obligated to provide.

A COLR is a telecommunications company that is required to offer basic telephone service to anyone who asks for it in a certain area — no matter where they live or what their income is.[4] This ensures that all Californians have access to essential, reliable, and affordable telecommunications service.

A COLR must provide what the Commission has identified as Residential Basic Telephone Service, or "basic service," which consists of the following features: voice calls, free 911 access, directory help, flexible billing, toll-free calls,

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[3] *In Complaint of Service-All-Tech, Inc. v. PT&T Co.* (Cal. PUC, 1977) 83 CPUC 135, Decision No. 88223 (complaint relating to the disconnection of telephone service where the court found that complainant had the burden of proof and that complainant's "failure to present any evidence present[ed] a total lack of meeting that burden"); *see also Pacific Bell Telephone Company, d/b/a AT&T California vs. Fones4All Corporation* (Cal. PUC, 2008) D.08-04-043, 2008 Cal. PUC LEXIS 132.

[4] These COLR rules were first adopted in D.96-10-066, and affirmed in D.12-12-038, in response to Assembly Bill (AB) 3643, enacted in 1994, which directed the Commission to direct COLRs to provide universal telecommunications services that are provided at affordable prices to all Californians regardless of linguistic, cultural, ethnic, physical, geographic, or income considerations. Currently, the Commission has opened Rulemaking (R.) 24-06-012 to consider making changes to the COLR rules.

help for deaf and disabled Californians (including access to the California Relay Service to assist people with hearing or speech disabilities in communicating by phone), customer service support, protections against unwanted charges, and operator services.[5] Importantly, COLR service can be delivered using any technology — like traditional landlines, internet-based phones, or wireless services (not just copper wire) — as long as it meets the state's minimum service standards.[6]

Contrary to the Complainant's assertions, the fact that Frontier is the COLR for Manteca, California does not mean that Frontier is required to provide copper wire free of charge to the Complainant. As noted, *supra,* pursuant to its COLR obligations, Frontier must provide basic service, which can be wireless service that meets the minimum service standards. There is no dispute that such an offer was made and that as a matter of law, Frontier's offer meets the definition of basic service that a COLR is required to provide. The fact that the complainant rejected Frontier's offer to provide wireless service does not impose an additional obligation on Frontier to provide copper service free of charge. The COLR rules that the Commission has adopted do not require Frontier to incur that cost.

4. Conclusion

For all the foregoing reasons, the Complainant has not demonstrated, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the defendant has violated any applicable

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[5] *See* D.12-12-038 at Appendix A.

[6] *See* Order Instituting Rulemaking Proceeding to Consider Changes to the Commission's Carrier of Last Resort Rules (R.24-06-012) at 2, footnote 2.

Commission-approved rule, law, tariff, or statute. The requested relief is denied, the case is dismissed with prejudice, and the proceeding is closed.

5. Assignment of Proceeding

Matthew Baker is the assigned Commission and Robert M. Mason III is the assigned Administrative Law Judge in this proceeding.

6. Waiver of Comment Period

Pursuant to Rule 14.7(b), the 30-day public review and comment period required by Pub. Util. Code § 311 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. Complainant's requests for relief are denied.
2. Case 25-10-001 is dismissed with prejudice.
3. Case 25-10-001 is closed.

This order is effective today.

Dated September 3, 2026, at Sacramento, California.

JOHN REYNOLDS
President
DARCIE L. HOUCK
KAREN DOUGLAS
MATTHEW BAKER
CHRISTINE HARADA
Commissioners