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Attorney for the Commission Staff

BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF)	
INLAND TELEPHONE COMPANY FOR)	CASE NO. INL-T-04-1
SUSPENSION OF NUMBER PORTABILITY)	
REQUIREMENTS.)	
)	COMMENTS OF THE
)	COMMISSION STAFF
)	

COMES NOW the Staff of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission, by and through its Attorney of record, Weldon B. Stutzman, Deputy Attorney General, in response to Order No. 29431, the Notice of Petition and Notice of Modified Procedure in Case No. INL-T-04-1 issued on February 24, 2004, and submits the following comments.

BACKGROUND

Section 251(b) of the federal Telecommunications Act requires all local exchange carriers to provide number portability to the extent technically feasible and in accordance with requirements prescribed by the Federal Communications Commission. In an order issued November 10, 2003, the FCC requires that incumbent LECs in areas outside the largest 100 metropolitan areas implement number portability no later than May 24, 2004. Section 251(f)(2) allows local exchange carriers with fewer than 2% of the nations subscriber lines to petition a state commission for suspension or modification of the requirements of Section 251(b).

On February 11, 2004, a Petition was filed by Inland Telephone Company requesting suspension until December 31, 2005, of the requirement that it provide number portability from wireline to wireless carriers. The Petition states that Inland will need to upgrade its switch at a cost of approximately \$400,000 in order to provide local number portability. Inland states suspending its number portability obligation will not adversely affect customers because it has not received a single number porting request and does not anticipate a significant demand in the foreseeable future.

STAFF ANALYSIS


As mentioned in the Inland petition, Section 251(f)(2) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 provides small carriers the opportunity to petition a state commission for suspension of local number portability requirements. According to its Application, it is technically infeasible for Inland's Mitel switches to provide LNP. Inland has already been granted an extension by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to allow the company time to replace its Mitel switches in Roslyn, Dewatto, Prescott, and Uniontown and now seeks an extension in Idaho to replace its Mitel switches in Leon and Lenore. Staff agrees with Inland's assertion that granting an extension in Idaho is in the public interest and would allow Inland to avoid adverse economic impact by coordinating a switch replacement schedule.

Staff believes that Inland is making a reasonable effort to comply with the LNP requirements by upgrading its central office switches and further believes Inland's petition provides an adequate reason to suspend its obligations to comply with the FCC's number portability requirements until December 31, 2005.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Inland Telephone Company's petition for temporary suspension of local number portability obligations be granted until December 31, 2005.

Respectfully submitted this 16th day of March 2004.



Weldon B. Stutzman
Deputy Attorney General

Technical Staff: Doug Cooley

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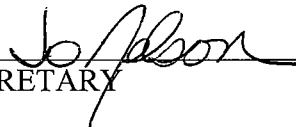
STAFF COMMENTS

MARCH 16, 2004

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE THIS 16TH DAY OF MARCH 2004,
SERVED THE FOREGOING **COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION STAFF**, IN
CASE NO. INL-T-04-1, BY MAILING A COPY THEREOF, POSTAGE PREPAID, TO
THE FOLLOWING:

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SECRETARY

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE