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IDAHO PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

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BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION)
OF QWEST CORPORATION FOR PRICE)
DEREGULATION OF BASIC LOCAL)
EXCHANGE SERVICES) CASE NO. QWE-T-02-25

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

Sharon Herrick

on behalf of

Intervenors Meierotto, et al

March 18, 2003

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BACKGROUND

Q. Please state your name, address and describe your background.

A. My name is Sharon Herrick, 11330 Hanks Street, Boise, Idaho. I have worked in various legal related jobs, usually dealing with the United States Bankruptcy Court and debtor and creditor clients. I am employed by Neal and Uhl in Boise. I am married and we have five children, all adults, and two of them and one daughter in law are presently living in our home

II. HOME COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS

Q. Please describe your telephone communication system at home.

A. We have a land line with two extension phones and one cell phone. The internet is operated by Cable One. We don't have extra features on our land line, except for a repair feature so the base cost is around \$30 per month. We make a lot of long distance calls so there is usually an additional \$20-\$30 charge.

Q. Why do you have land line?

A. Our house is large and with our remodeling it will be 3000 square feet. With 5 adults and this size of a home I absolutely have to have a land line with extension phones.

Q. Could you use a cell phone to replace the land line system at your home?

A. Oh no. As I say, I do have a cell phone, but it can't have extension phones and I can just imagine where it would be if it was the only phone in the house. Someone would take it with them, or someone would leave it in a room where we can't hear the phone. If we had more than one cell phone, the second one would cost more. And which number would be listed in the phone book or would we have to list both numbers? Cell phone replacement for our land line is simply impractical and there is the expense.

1 **Q. What expense are you concerned about?**

2 A. Well, with 5 people in the home, plus visitors, our phone gets a lot of usage.
3 Everyone uses the land line for calls at our home and I am glad they do because I am sure that
4 we would go over even a generous usage limit for cell calls.

5 **Q. Qwest is asking that the Public Utilities deregulate land line rates for**
6 **residential use. Do you think this is in the public interest?**

7 A. No because I, and I know others, have had occasional difficulty with a Qwest
8 billing. About 2 years ago my phone was improperly disconnected and reconnected and I had
9 a very difficult time getting the matter resolved, because I think I was billed twice in one
10 month. It was difficult to get through to customer service and the issue was never resolved
11 to my satisfaction.

12 Further, there is no land line competition that I know of, and I checked around a year
13 or so ago. For most families, the land line is the only real choice because of the reasons I
14 mentioned. Confusion would result in any family if there was just a cell phone. I raised
15 teenagers, and I know that if there was one cell phone the phone would continually disappear.
16 I know where my land line is.

17 So, I think there is no question that our family and many other families have no
18 choice and the price of my land line would just increase and if I didn't like it, or I dispute
19 something about the bill, its just too bad for me.

20 **Q. You said you have a cell phone. Why is that?**

21 A. We use the cell phone when primarily my husband or I am out of the home, and
22 especially traveling. It gives us some security. We have the minimum AT& T plan.

23 **Q. In connection with your bills have you noticed a difference in the taxes and**
24 **fees charged?**

25

1 A. I watch all of my bills carefully and yes, I have noticed a difference. My residence
2 bill has about \$8.50 in taxes and fees but the cell bill has only around \$1.50.

3 **Q. What do you think about this?**

4 A. Well, Qwest is saying that cell phones are competing for land line business. I think
5 that those who cause the taxes and fees to be charged should make those charges equal so
6 that prices are fair. The land line charge should be lower and the cell phone charges higher
7 so that they both are equal in the middle. These charges are unfairly influencing the difference
8 in price.

9 **Q. What are your recommendations to the Commission regarding Qwest's**
10 **application?**

11 A. First I think local telephone rates should not be deregulated. There isn't
12 competition for land lines, and families need them.

13 I think that Qwest should be assisted in making land line service more competitive
14 by resolving the inequity in taxes and fees assessed. One third of the residential line charge
15 is taxes and fees!

16 Third, I am aware that Mr.Neal thinks there should be some easy, informal
17 independent arbitration procedure for bill disputes that is binding on both parties. This is
18 good and would help improve customer satisfaction with Qwest. I think Qwest needs to
19 work with its customers more and its market share would improve.

20 **Q. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

21 A. I would just like to thank the commission for listening to my views.
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