DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO:COMMISSIONER HANSEN

COMMISSIONER NELSON

COMMISSIONER SMITH

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CAROLEE HALL

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DAVID SCOTT

TONYA CLARK

WORKING FILE

FROM:WAYNE HART

DATE:OCTOBER 22, 1997

RE:WASHINGTON COUNTY  PETITION FOR EXTENDED CALLING AREA BETWEEN THE PAYETTE, WEISER, MIDVALE, CAMBRIDGE, FRUITLAND, NEW PLYMOUTH, AND ONTARIO, OREGON EXCHANGES, AS WELL AS INCLUSION IN THE TREASURE VALLEY EXTENDED AREA SERVICE REGION.

On September 30, 1997, we received a petition signed by more than 90 customers  from Washington County (mostly from Weiser, but also from Payette and New Plymouth) requesting Extended Area Service to the communities of Payette, Weiser, Midvale, Cambridge, Fruitland, New Plymouth, and Ontario, Oregon, as well as to be included in the Southeast Idaho EAS region.  The Petition was forwarded to the Commission by State Representative Donna Jones, who has indicated to Staff that additional petitions from other communities in Washington County will be submitted in the future.

The petitioners state that Payette and Weiser are only 12 miles apart and that residents from the southern portion of Washington County are in the Payette exchange, but share medical facilities, schools, law enforcement, county government and businesses in Weiser, the county seat of Washington County.  The petitioners also claim the communities of Midvale and Cambridge, located in the upper portion of Washington County, have virtually no medical facilities and limited businesses and services accessible without a toll call.

The petition claims all of the communities named in the petition must make calls to the Treasure Valley EAS region for many medical facilities and businesses, as well as state and federal government offices that are only available in the communities located in the Treasure Valley.  In addition, the communities of Fruitland and New Plymouth are located near Ontario, Oregon, but are assessed a toll when calling Ontario.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

As a result of previous petitions, the Commission is already considering EAS between the communities of Payette and Weiser in Case No. USW-S-96-6.  In response to informal inquiries from residents in these communities, Staff had broadened its analysis to include the communities of New Plymouth and Fruitland, as well as calling to the Treasure Valley EAS region.  With the exception of Fruitland, these routes are all U S WEST routes.  Staff recommends that these petitions be considered part of the record in that case.

The communities in the northern part of Washington County, Midvale and Cambridge, are served by Midvale and Cambridge Telephone Companies, respectively.  Staff does not believe the routes involving these communities should be included in the current case, as it would delay those proceedings.  Staff recommends the Commission defer action on these routes until after the Payette-Weiser case has concluded.

 As the Ontario routes would involve decisions by the Oregon PUC, as well as the FCC, Staff recommends deferring proceedings for those routes as well.  U S WEST has informed Staff that it would be willing to provide calling data from its exchanges in the area to Ontario on an informal basis.  Staff recommends the Commission delay a decision on whether to open a case for the Ontario routes until Staff has reviewed the calling data for these routes and can provide the Commission with a preliminary analysis of calling patterns for these routes.

COMMISSION DECISION

Does the Commission wish to include these petitions as part of the record in Case No. USW-S-96-6 and defer decisions on the other routes identified in these petitions?

Wayne Hart

wh:washco.dm/udmemos