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Attorney for the Commission Staff

BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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| INTHE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF U S WEST COMMUNICATIONS, INC. AND ADVANCED TELCOM GROUP, INC. FOR APPROVAL OF NEGOTIATED/ARBITRATED TERMS OF AGREEMENT FOR INTERCONNECTION, RESALE AND UNBUNDLED ELEMENTS PURSUANT TO 47 U.S.C. § 252.                                                                | ))))))) | CASE NO. USW-T-98-22COMMENTS OF THECOMMISSION STAFF |

COMES  NOW  the Staff of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission, by and through its attorney of record, Brad Purdy, Deputy Attorney General, and submits the following comments in response to the Joint Application filed in this case by U S WEST Communications, Inc.

(U S WEST) and Advanced Telcom Group, Inc. (ATG) and pursuant to the Notice of Modified Procedure issued by the Commission on December 15, 1998.

On November 16, 1998, U S WEST Communications, Inc. (USW) and Advanced Telcom Group, Inc. (ATG), a competitive local exchange service provider, submitted a Joint Application for approval of an interconnection agreement in accordance with Section 252(e) of the Federal Telecommunications Act.  The companies indicated the agreement had been reached through voluntary negotiations and claimed the agreement is consistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity.  They requested the Commission approve the agreement without a hearing or intervention by other parties.

Section 252 indicates that such agreements are to be submitted to state commissions for approval.  Agreements adopted through negotiation may only be rejected if the state commission finds that:

(i) the agreement (or portion thereof) discriminates against a telecommunications carrier not a party to the agreement; or

(ii) the implementation of such agreement or portion is not consistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff reviewed the language of this agreement and found the terms and conditions to be essentially identical to those contained in the agreement between Sprint and U S WEST the Commission approved in Order No. 27198 in November of 1997.

Staff concludes that the terms or conditions in this agreement are not discriminatory.  Staff concurs with the companies’ claim that the agreement is consistent with the pro-competitive policies of the Commission, the Idaho Legislature, and the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and therefore is consistent with the public interest.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission approve this interconnection agreement as filed.

Respectfully submitted this                  day of December 1998.

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Brad PurdyDeputy Attorney General

Technical Staff:  Wayne Hart

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