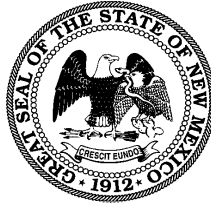


NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

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NM PRC Adopts Company Specific Benchmarks For Access Charge Reform- Commits to Review In One Year

Santa Fe--New Mexico Public Regulation Commission Thursday approved an emergency amendment to the Telecommunication Access Reform Rules that adopts company-specific business benchmarks and requires the Commission in one year from now to review access reform data to determine if the company specific business benchmarks are in the best interest of telecommunication customers.

The amendment replaces previous language in the Access Reform Rules adopted on November 2.

Company specific business benchmarks will be based on telecommunication companies' current basic business rates plus \$1.68 per month. Companies will have the option to raise their rates to the business benchmark.

Under the original language, with the single statewide business benchmark set at Qwest rates, the basic business benchmark rates would have been \$36.05 a month. Nine of 14 telecom carriers in the state would have experienced increases in their basic business rates. Under company specific business benchmarks basic business rates will range from \$15 to \$25 a month.

The emergency amendment also increases the State Universal Service Fund (SUSF) to 2.88 percent. Under the original rule the SUSF would have been 2.4 percent. The SUSF is a surcharge that will be imposed on monthly phone bills for instate services, including all residential and business telecommunication customers and wireless subscribers. The SUSF will be about 12 cents on the average phone bill.

NM PRC Commissioners adopted the emergency amendment at the end of their daylong session of oral comments from representatives of telecommunications carriers, including wireless companies, and other interested parties. Chairman Ben R. Lujan and Commissioners E. Shirley Baca and David W. King voted in favor of the company specific amendment; Vice-Chairman Jason Marks and Commissioner Lynda Lovejoy voted against the amendment.

Adopted as an emergency amendment, the company specific benchmark language will be come effective once it is filed with the New Mexico Records Center.

Commissioners will consider further definitions to the "Indian, Tribal and Pueblo" exemptions to the SUSF at their formal meeting Tuesday, December 20. ###