

At the meeting of the Public Service Commission of the State of Montana held at the Commission's Offices in Helena, Montana, on October 28, 2003, the following members were present:

Bob Rowe, Chairman
Thomas J. Schneider, Vice Chairman
Matt Brainard, Commissioner
Greg Jergeson, Commissioner
Jay Stovall, Commissioner

APPEARANCE

Wayne Budt, Administrator
Transportation/Centralized Services Division

(197) In the matter of the approval of Commission Minutes; Commissioner Jergeson moved to approve the Commission Minutes for the week of October 21, 2003. Commissioner Brainard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPEARANCE

Scott Fabel

(198) In the matter of MCI Telecommunications Corporation - N2003.10.145: On October 8, 2003, MCI filed Transmittal Letter No. 03-14. In this filing MCI is making textual changes to Option DDD-Basic Calling Plan AAA.

Commissioner Brainard moved to approve Tariff Transmittal Letter No. 03-14. Commissioner Jergeson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPEARANCE

Scott Fabel

(199) In the matter of Qwest Communications - N2003.10.148: On October 7, 2003, Qwest filed Tariff Transmittal 03-29, Clarifying Eligibility for Tribal Lifeline Support. This filing is being made to comply with FCC Order No. 03-115, which clarifies consumer eligibility criteria for receiving Tribal Lifeline support. This updated intrastate Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) tariff language broadens the tariff to include a Tribal lifeline eligibility statement to as follows: "Tribal Lifeline support is provided to applicants who meet the eligibility requirements established within the state guidelines for the Low-Income Telephone Assistance program as shown in 5.2.6.A."

Commissioner Schneider moved to approve Tariff Transmittal 03-29. Commissioner Stovall seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPEARANCE

Phil Cooke

(200) In the matter of Winter Termination Policy: The PSC's winter termination rules require regulated utilities to obtain PSC approval before shutting off electric or natural gas service to a nonpaying residential customer from November 1 to April 1. Commission policy has been to delegate authority on an annual basis to the PSC compliance staff to approve or disapprove utility requests for winter shutoffs.

Commissioner Stovall moved to approve delegating authority to the PSC compliance staff. Commissioner Jergeson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPEARANCE

Eric Eck

(201) In the matter of the Commission's discussion of Black Hills Quarterly Fuel Rate Rider - Docket No. D2003.9.139:

Commissioner Stovall moved to approve the draft order. Commissioner Brainard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPEARANCE

Martin Jacobson, Kim Moran

(202) In the matter of the Commission's discussion of Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative - EAS, expand Missoula region and Helena region - Docket No. D2003.1.8:

Commissioner Rowe moved to deny joinder, to establish a separate process concerning the coalition proposal, to give the coalition an opportunity to refile the proposal if it chooses, convene interested parties, including local exchange carriers, and include language making it clear the Commission retains jurisdiction over Blackfoot as to extended area service. Commissioner Stovall seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPEARANCE

Tina Shorten, Jory Allen, Marla Larson

(203) In the matter of the Commission's discussion of the Natural Gas Summit Financial Update and Request for Approval of Funds for Payment of Facilities Rental and other related follow-up:

Commissioner Brainard moved to pay the remaining balance of \$155.50 owed to the Great Northern Hotel. Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPEARANCE

Marla Larson, Martin Jacobson

(204) In the matter of the Commission's discussion of PSC - Notice of Inquiry on Gas Utility Supply Acquisition Strategies - Docket No. D2003.10.151:

Commissioner Jergeson moved to issue a Notice of Inquiry and establish a meeting date set by staff based on consulting with PSC Commissioners. Commissioner Brainard seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

APPEARANCE

Al Brogan, Robin McHugh

(205) In the matter of the Commission's discussion of NWE Bankruptcy - Placeholder to get direction on any matter related to the NWE bankruptcy:

Commissioner Schneider moved to authorize staff to participate in the November bankruptcy court proceeding as necessary either by traveling or coordinating with the Montana Consumer Counsel or outside counsel. Commissioner Stovall seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting was adjourned.

BOB ROWE, Chairman

THOMAS J. SCHNEIDER, Vice Chairman

MATT BRAINARD, Commissioner

GREG JERGSON, Commissioner

JAY STOVALL, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Connie Jones
Commission Secretary

(SEAL)