



State of Florida



## Public Service Commission

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TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0850

**-M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M-**

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**DATE:** August 29, 2023

**TO:** Office of Commission Clerk (Teitzman)

**FROM:** Office of Industry Development and Market Analysis (Nave, Wooten)<sup>CH</sup>  
Office of the General Counsel (Sparks) *ACE*

**RE:** Docket No. 20230076-TP – 2024 State certification under 47 C.F.R. §54.313 and §54.314, annual reporting requirements for high-cost recipients and certification of support for eligible telecommunications carriers.

**AGENDA:** 09/12/23 – Regular Agenda – Interested Persons May Participate

**COMMISSIONERS ASSIGNED:** All Commissioners

**PREHEARING OFFICER:** La Rosa

**CRITICAL DATES:** 10/02/23 (Filing deadline with the Federal Communications Commission and the Universal Service Administrative Company)

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:** None

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### Case Background

One of the primary principles of universal service support as described in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Telecom Act) is for consumers in all regions to have reasonably comparable access to telecommunications and information services at reasonably comparable rates.<sup>1</sup> The federal universal service high-cost program is now designed to help ensure that consumers in rural, insular, and high-cost areas have access to modern communications networks capable of providing voice and broadband service, both fixed and mobile, at rates that are reasonably comparable to those in urban areas.<sup>2</sup> The program supports

<sup>1</sup> 47 U.S.C. §254(b)(3) (2023)

<sup>2</sup> FCC, "Universal Service for High Cost Areas - Connect America Fund," updated July 7, 2023, <https://www.fcc.gov/general/universal-service-high-cost-areas-connect-america-fund>, accessed August 17, 2023.

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the goal of universal service by allowing eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) to recover some of the costs of service provision in high-cost areas from the federal Universal Service Fund. Carriers can be designated as ETCs in Florida by the Florida Public Service Commission (Commission) or the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

In order for carriers to receive federal universal service high-cost support, state commissions must annually certify to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) and to the FCC that each carrier complies with the requirements of Section 254(e) of the Telecom Act by using high-cost support “only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended.”<sup>3</sup> Certification will be filed online by the Commission through USAC’s online portal. Immediately following online certification, the USAC website will automatically generate a letter that may be submitted electronically to the FCC to satisfy the submission requirements of 47 C.F.R. §54.314(c). In order for a carrier to be eligible for high-cost universal service support for all of calendar year 2024, certification must be submitted by the Commission by October 2, 2023.<sup>4</sup>

The Commission has jurisdiction pursuant to 47 C.F.R. §54.313 and §54.314, as well as Chapter 364, F.S.

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<sup>3</sup> 47 C.F.R §54.314(a) (2023)

<sup>4</sup> 47 C.F.R §54.314(d) (2023)