

State of Florida



# Public Service Commission

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**DATE:** June 4, 2020

**TO:** Adam J. Teitzman, Commission Clerk, Office of Commission Clerk

**FROM:** Curtis J. Williams, Public Utility Analyst IV, Office of Industry Development & Market Analysis CH

**RE:** Docket No. 20200073-TP - Commission Approval of Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Proposed Budget

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Attached are FTRI's written comments. Please add to docket file. If you have questions please contact me at 413-6924.



June 3, 2020

Mr. Curtis Williams, Public Utility Analyst  
Office of Industry Development & Market Analysis  
Florida Public Service Commission  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

**Re: Written Comments for PSC Agenda Conference Docket No. 20200073-TP**

Mr. Williams:

As TASA administrator, FTRI appreciates the opportunity to provide the following written comments for Commissioner review pertaining to Docket No. 20200073-TP, specifically in the context of Commission staff recommendations regarding the FY 2021 FTRI iPad Pilot Program.

**TASA Legislative Intent**

FTRI disagrees with Commission staff's stated beliefs and correlating recommendations that an iPad is not a specialized telecommunications device authorized by applicable law. Section 427.702 (3)(c) and 427.702 (3)(g) states that it is the intent of the Legislature:

- (3)(c) That the telecommunications access system includes the distribution of telecommunications devices for the deaf that are **compatible with the telecommunications relay service system and has the capability of incorporating new technologies as they develop.**
- (3)(g) That the telecommunications access system **uses state-of-the-art technology for specialized telecommunications devices and the telecommunications relay service and encourages the incorporation of new developments in technology, to the extent that it has demonstrated benefits consistent with the intent of this act and is in the best interest of the citizens of this state.**

**Accessibility Benefits**

- For Florida residents who are deaf or severely hard-of-hearing, Apple iPads include native accessibility settings that enable the equipment to function in TTY mode using Real Time Text (RTT) that is FCC compliant, transmits communications to and from any 911 public safety answering point (PSAP) in the United States, and sends/receives text and voice simultaneously in both directions on the same call.
- For Florida residents who cannot speak, the Proloquo2Go application enables the iPad to function as a telecommunications device leveraging symbol-supported communication to originate calls and generate voice transmissions during the call.

**Relevant Precedent**

- Federal Title 47, which defines:
  - “Telecommunications” as the transmission, between or among points specified by the user, of information of the user’s choosing, without change in the form or content of the information as sent and received.
  - “Customer Premises Equipment” as equipment that can be employed on the premises of a person (other than a carrier) to originate, route, or terminate telecommunications.
- The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) of 2010 which updates federal communications law to increase the access of persons with disabilities to modern communications, and also ensures that accessibility laws enacted in the 1980s and 1990s – including TASA – are brought up to date with 21st century technologies spanning digital, broadband, and mobile innovations.
- In early April 2020, Governor DeSantis announced the launch of Project VITAL (Virtual Inclusive Technology for All), a pilot program which provides two tablets per assisted living facility to bring families together and help mitigate feelings of isolation resulting from COVID-19. According to the press release, the tablets will be used to place telephone calls, video calls, and video chats.
- As of May 2020, iPads and/or iPhones are distributed in twenty-four (24) states through equipment distribution programs established via legislation that mirrors TASA.

**Conclusion**

In the use cases that will be evaluated during the FY 2021 Pilot Program, FTRI will distribute iPads configured as specialized telecommunications equipment that is consistent with legislative intent, incorporates state-of-the-art technology, and – most importantly – provides accessibility benefits that are in the best interest of the citizens of Florida. In accordance with TASA and relevant precedent, FTRI requests that the Commission endorse the FTRI iPad Pilot Program as approved by the Board on February 24, 2020.

Thanks for your continued support of these vital Title XXX social welfare services.

Regards,

DocuSigned by:



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Sean Bankston

FTRI Executive Director