

Sailing the Seas of Telecommunications

The 20th Anniversary of the Telecom Act: Taking Stock and Looking Forward

(Time: 1 hour)

Moderator: Diane Munns, Esq. – Senior Director of External Affairs & Regulatory Policy, Environmental Defense Fund

Panelists: David R. Conn – Vice President, State Government Affairs, T-Mobile USA

Jeffrey S. Lanning – Vice President, Federal Regulatory Affairs, CenturyLink

Labros E. Pialis – Telecommunications Analyst, Executive Policy Manager, Office of Vice Chairman Commissioner Andrew G. Place, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission

In February of this year, we celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Telecom Act which ushered in the beginning of an era of competition in the telecom space. That competition has led to innovation in products and services, new entrants in all aspects of the marketplace, lower prices, higher quality of service – and most of all – customer choice. Despite these gains, some argue the Telecom Act needs a re-write while others think we should keep building on the Act's success.

This panel will take stock of where we have been since the passage of the Act and look forward to what may lie ahead. Some questions to be explored include:

- What were the successes of the Telecom Act? Its failures?
- What are the most important innovations since 1996?
- What kind of new entrants have we seen since the law passed in 1996?
- What were some of the most important policy decisions implemented since the passage of the Telecom Act?
- Looking ahead what happens to important policy issues like USF?
- How has the Federal-State relationship evolved and what is its future?
- Will the on-going M&A activity continue and what is its impact on competition? What is the path forward for competition overall?
- Are there parallels between what has happened in telecom since the passage of the Act and the energy side?
- Do we need to re-write the Telecom Act? If so, is that a complete overhaul or targeted reform?

Materials:

- Reflecting on Twenty Years under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, A Collection of Essays on Implementation, Federal Communications Law Journal, Issue 1, p. 1-82 (2016) (82 pages)
<http://www.fclj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/68.1.1-Reflecting-on-the-1996-Act.pdf>
- Answering Four Questions on the Anniversary of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Harold Furchtgott-Roth & Arielle Roth, Federal Communications Law Journal, Volume 68, Issue 1, p. 83-95 (12 pages)
<http://www.fclj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/68.1.2-HFR-Comment.pdf>

Moderator

Diane Munns

As senior director of external affairs and regulatory policy for the Environmental Defense Fund's Clean Energy program, Munns applies her experience in the public and private energy sectors to find ways to transition to a clean, low-carbon energy economy. Prior to joining EDF, she served as Vice President of Regulatory Relations and Energy Efficiency at MidAmerican Energy Company. Munns also served as the Executive Director of Retail Energy Services at the Edison Electric Institute.

Munns spent over two decades with the Iowa Utilities Board first as General Counsel and later as the Chairman and Member. During her tenure as general counsel, she litigated the seminal case regarding the Telecommunications Act of 1996 on behalf of the states, *Iowa Utilities Board et al v. Federal Communications Commission et al*, before the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court. While a member of the Iowa Utilities Board, Diane also served two terms as the President of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) leading many telecommunications discussions involving ongoing implementation of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. She has testified before Congress and served on the Federal Communications Commission's Federal-State Joint Board on Separations.

Panelists

Dave Conn

Since October 2003, Mr. Conn has been National Director, State and Local Government Affairs for T-Mobile USA, leading the regulatory and legislative efforts of the company before state utility commissions, state legislatures, and local governmental bodies on all issues of interest to T-Mobile, including consumer protection and service quality, regulatory fees and taxes, state regulation of services and fees, and the government affairs component of facilities siting (towers and tower locations). T-Mobile USA provides mobile communications and data services to over 19 million customers throughout the United States.

Prior to joining T-Mobile, Mr. Conn spent nine years with McLeodUSA, a leading provider of competitive wireline telecommunications and data services. As Vice President and Deputy General Counsel of McLeodUSA, Mr. Conn's team had primary responsibility for the legal support of McLeodUSA's retail telecommunications operations, including state and federal regulatory affairs, legislative affairs, interconnection agreements and policy, legal elements of product development, and support for retail telecommunications sales and marketing-related activity.

Prior to 1994, Mr. Conn worked for the Iowa Department of Justice, the Iowa Utilities Board, and the Iowa State Commerce Commission, spending 16 years representing the interests of consumers generally in administrative practice and in court, on issues related to telecommunications, electric, and natural gas rates and policy.

Mr. Conn has over 25 years' experience in telecommunications policy issues, and has appeared as both a lawyer and a witness before various courts, state utility commissions, and the United States Congress. He has also been a guest lecturer on Telecommunications Law at the University of Washington School of Law; served as a Director of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), which administers the federal Universal Service Fund; as a Member of the FCC-Joint Board Rural Task Force on Universal Service; as a Director of the Competition Policy Institute; and as a Member of the Operating Board of the Association for Local Telecommunications Services (ALTS). He has also testified before Congress on privacy issues related to Caller Identification service.

Jeff Lanning

Jeff is Vice President of Policy and Federal Regulatory Affairs at CenturyLink, where he is responsible for developing and advocating company positions before the FCC and other federal agencies. Jeff also supports other federal advocacy and legal matters, and counsels the company's business units. Before joining CenturyLink, Jeff worked at USTelecom, Wilmer Hale, Z-Tel Communications, the FCC, and Reboul, MacMurray, et al (now Ropes & Gray, New York). Jeff received an M.B.A. from The Wharton School, a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law, and a B.A. from the University of Virginia.

Labros Pialis

Mr. Pialis is a Telecommunications Analyst with the Office of Vice Chairman Andrew G. Place, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Pa. PUC). In 2005-2015, Mr. Pialis served with the Pa. PUC Office of Commissioner James H. Cawley. Since January 2005, Mr. Pialis was a Rate Case Review Specialist with the Office of Special Assistants (OSA) at the Pa. PUC. In 1998-2004, Mr. Pialis worked with Rhoads and Sinon LLP and Rhoads and Sinon Group LLC. Mr. Pialis has had extensive involvement in a number of areas relating to the regulation of telecommunications carriers and services within Pennsylvania, including matters of competition and interconnection under the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996. Mr. Pialis is also a Staff member of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, an advisory body to the Federal Communications Commission

(FCC). Mr. Pilalis was a Fixed Utility Manager with the Telecommunications Group at the Office of Special Assistants and the Bureau of Fixed Utility Services at the Pa. PUC in 1993-1998. Prior to joining the Pa. PUC, Mr. Pilalis served as a Staff member at the Economics and Finance Division, Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission in 1982-1993 attaining the rank of Assistant Chief Economist. Mr. Pilalis is a graduate of the Indiana University School of Law at Indianapolis (JD – 1989), the School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University Bloomington (MPA – 1980), and the School of Arts and Sciences, University of Nebraska at Lincoln (BA Physics – 1978). Mr. Pilalis is a licensed attorney in the State of Indiana. Mr. Pilalis is a volunteer community sponsor for foreign military officers studying at the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.