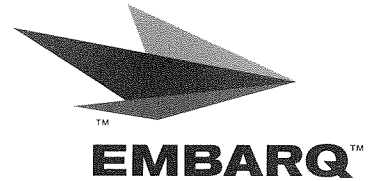


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February 27, 2007

Ms. Samantha Cibula
Staff Counsel
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

RE: Proposed Lifeline Rule Development – Undocketed

Dear Ms. Cibula:

At the conclusion of the February 6, 2007 workshop on the proposed Lifeline rule development, staff requested post workshop comments be filed by February 27, 2007. In that regard, attached are Embarq-Florida, Incorporated's comments on the draft rule.

If you have any questions regarding Embarq's comments, please do not hesitate to call me at 850-847-0173.

Sincerely,

Sandra A. Khazraee

Enclosure

Sandra A. Khazraee
REGULATORY MANAGER
LAW AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Voice: (850) 847-0173
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FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Proposed Amendment of Rule 25-4.0665)
F.A.C., Lifeline Service)

Undocketed
February 27, 2006

Embarq - Florida Post-Workshop Comments

Embarq – Florida, Inc. (Embarq) hereby submits the following comments on Staff’s Proposed Amendment of Lifeline Rule 25-4.0665. Embarq supports the Commission Staff’s efforts to implement Lifeline Rules for all certified Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs).

On January 10, 2007, an informal meeting was held by Commission staff to talk briefly about any issues with the proposed amendment to the Lifeline rules. This was followed on February 6, 2007 by a formal noticed workshop to discuss the draft Lifeline rule changes. Embarq participated in both workshops regarding the amendment of Proposed Rule 25-4.0665 and offers the following written comments in addition to the oral comments made at the meetings. Embarq appreciates the opportunity to work with staff and the other parties in this rulemaking docket.

Rule 25-4.0665 (3):

Embarq would suggest a wording change to this paragraph in the rule in order to address the issue that wireless ETCs do not have “basic local exchange service” and “nonbasic service”. Additionally, although Embarq currently allows Lifeline subscribers to purchase bundled service packages, we believe that should be a business decision and not a rule requirement. The FCC rules on Lifeline do not require companies. Embarq recommends replacing staff’s proposed rule language with the following:

The Lifeline discount shall be applied to the tariffed basic or otherwise lowest generally available residential rate.

Rule 25-4.0665 (4):

As part of an eligible telecommunications carrier’s (ETC) Lifeline Assistance Plan, an ETC must offer a subscriber eligible for Lifeline service, pursuant to subsections (1) and (2) of this rule, Link Up service in accordance with 47 C.F.R. s. 54.411, which is incorporated herein by reference.

Embarq agrees with the comments made by TDS Telecom that the language in this paragraph should be clarified that subsection (1)b only applies to those ETCs that have been authorized to rebalance access and local rates. The following language is recommended to be added to the existing proposed rule language:

ETCs not operating under the provision of Section 364.164, F.S. are exempt from subsection (1)b

Rule 25-4.0665 (8):

ETCs must allow customers the option to submit Link-Up or Lifeline applications via mail, facsimile or electronically. ETCs must also allow customers the option to mail or facsimile copies of supporting documents.

Embarq requests that the requirement to accept applications electronically be omitted. Embarq's systems are not currently able to accept applications electronically and to require electronic acceptance of applications could cause Embarq to incur additional, potentially significant cost. The suggested wording for this paragraph of the rule would be:

ETCs must allow customers the option to submit Link-Up or Lifeline applications via mail or facsimile. ETCs must also allow customers the option to mail or facsimile copies of supporting documents.

Rule 25-4.0665 (9):

ETCs shall provide the subscriber with an application receipt. The receipt must include the date the ETC received the subscriber's application along with a list of the documents, if any, that were provided with the application. The receipt shall be provided within 3 days of the ETC receiving the application.

Embarq's current procedures do not include notification to any group of customers that an application has been received (application receipt) and recommends that this paragraph not be added to the existing Lifeline rules. It appears to add very little if any real benefit to the customers and yet it will increase the Companies' costs and work load. For Embarq, once an application with appropriate documentation is received, it takes approximately 5 business days to process the customer account to add lifeline credits effective back to the date the application is received. The Lifeline credits are detailed on the next customer bill and all bills thereafter. Therefore, customers will see the Lifeline benefit on their bills within no more than two months. If the subscriber has questions in the interim about their Lifeline credit, they can call their company to inquire about the status of their application.

Rule 25-4.0665 (16):

Embarq reiterates the comments made above regarding the application receipt requirement found in paragraph 9 and recommends that the requirement to provide an application receipt not be added in to this rule language as it adds an unnecessary step which increases the Companies' costs of processing Lifeline orders. Specifically, Embarq proposes deleting the following statement from this rule paragraph:

The ETCs shall provide the subscriber with an application receipt as set forth in subsection (9) of this rule.

Rule 25-4.0665 (25):

ETCs offering Link-Up and Lifeline service must submit quarterly reports to the Commission's Director of Competitive Markets and Enforcement no later than two weeks following the ending of each quarter as follows: First Quarter (January 1 through March 31); Second Quarter (April 1 through June 30); Third Quarter (July 1 through September 30); Fourth Quarter (October 1 through December 31). The quarterly reports shall include the following data:

Embarq believes that requiring quarterly reporting is burdensome and more frequent than is necessary or even useful. Embarq supports an annual reporting requirement. If an annual requirement is found to not be frequent enough to meet the needs of the Commission, reporting should be required no more frequently than semi-annually. The rule as proposed would require the report to be submitted no later than two weeks following the end of the quarter. The data necessary to develop the reports is not available within two weeks following the quarter-end. Embarq proposes the requirement be changed to no later than 30 days following the end of the annual or semi-annual period. Finally, the proposed rule details the various data that should be included in the report. Certain portions of that data are currently not available and would require major system and process changes to capture. Embarq proposes that the rule be changed to read **“The reports shall include the following data if available in the normal course of business:”**

Conclusion

Embarq appreciates the opportunity to comment on these draft rule amendments and commits to working with the FPSC staff and OPC on the adoption of these additional rules. For the reasons stated above, Embarq recommends modifying the staff proposed rules to incorporate the suggestions offered herein.