

SECRETARY'S RECORD, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska ) Application No. NUSF-2  
Public Service Commission, on )  
its own motion, seeking to ) Progression Order #4  
establish guidelines for the )  
administration of the Nebraska )  
Lifeline Program. ) Entered: May 23, 2001

BY THE COMMISSION:

1. On December 2, 1997, in Docket No. C-1645, the Commission entered an order which approved the creation of the Nebraska Lifeline and Link-Up Assistance Plan. Subsequently, the Nebraska Legislature authorized the creation of the Nebraska Universal Service Fund ("NUSF") and charged the Commission with maximizing the federal lifeline support for qualified Nebraska telephone subscribers. The Commission, opened this docket on March 16, 1999, for the purpose of administrating the Nebraska Lifeline Program.

O P I N I O N A N D F I N D I N G S

2. Once a qualifying subscriber has been approved to receive support from the Nebraska Lifeline Program, the subscriber can contact a telecommunications company that provides Lifeline service to initiate such service. In certain cases, because of billing cycles and administrative processes, a qualifying subscriber may receive a bill that does not contain the reductions due to the subscriber. The Commission has received complaints about these bills from qualifying subscribers, with most expressing concern regarding their ability to pay the amount indicated on the bill. In some cases, the Commission has been informed that qualifying subscribers have disconnected service over concerns that they could not pay the billed amount.

3. Clearly, qualifying Lifeline subscribers disconnecting service because of concerns regarding billed amounts that are not owed by the subscriber is not in the public interest and violates the spirit of the Nebraska Lifeline Program.

4. The NUSF Department will examine current administrative processes to determine if there are any improvements that can be made in order to reduce this problem. However, given the varying billing cycles and administrative processes of telecommunications companies, the Commission does not believe that this problem can be eliminated.

5. Therefore, the Commission proposes the following:

- A. Telecommunications companies shall not disconnect a qualifying subscriber for non-payment until 60 days after all credits due for both Lifeline and Link-Up have been fully applied to the subscriber's account.
- B. Telecommunications companies shall notify all qualifying subscribers, in writing, immediately upon their subscription to Lifeline service that:
  - 1) Lifeline and Link-Up credits due to the subscriber may not appear on their initial bill(s); and
  - 2) The subscriber cannot be disconnected until 60 days after all credits due have been fully applied to their account.

6. Parties that wish to comment on the above proposals may do so on or before June 15, 2001.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that interested parties file comments on or before June 15, 2001.

MADE AND ENTERED at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 23rd day of May, 2001.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

*Aime C. Boyle*

*Frank E. Landis*  
Chairman

*Frank E. Landis*  
//s// Frank E. Landis

ATTEST:

*And S. Pollack*  
Executive Director