

STATE OF MINNESOTA

BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Nancy Lange
Dan Lipschultz
Matt Schuerger
Katie Sieben
John Tuma

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Vice Chair
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

Frontier Communications of Minnesota, Inc.
Tariff Filing for Instituting a Charge for Paper Bills

P-405/AM-17-427

**REPLY COMMENTS OF
FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS OF MINNESOTA, INC.**

On May 26, 2017, Frontier Communications of Minnesota, Inc. (“Frontier”) made a tariff filing to institute a charge for paper bills for customers of the Digital Phone Bronze offering. As described in the filing, Frontier is instituting a \$1 charge for paper bills for customers of the Frontier Digital Phone Bronze product. That charge is waived for those customers who opt to use electronic billing instead of paper billing. No change to the content or substance of the bills will result from this introduction. Paper bills will look the same as they do now, and the electronic billing will look the same as it does now. The charge should serve as an inducement for customers to move to electronic billing which is more efficient and environmentally friendly.

On June 13, 2017, the Minnesota Department of Commerce (the “Department”) filed comments, objecting to the filing, and asserting that the filing did not comply with the requirements of Minnesota Rules 7810.1400, subpart 1. The Department urged the Commission to disapprove the filing.

Relevant rule and statute

In its comments, the Department identifies one rule and one statutory section that it deems relevant to Frontier’s filing.

First, the Department notes Minnesota Rules 7810.1400, subpart 1, which states that:

Bills to customers shall be typed or machine-printed, rendered regularly, and shall contain an itemized listing of all charges and the period of time covered by the billing. Statements itemizing message toll charges shall be included in bills to customer.

Second, the Department notes Minnesota Statutes § 237.101 which states:

A telephone company may provide a customer's periodic account statement to the customer in electronic format in lieu of paper format if the customer has authorized the electronic format in writing.

The Department also identifies the section of Frontier's current Alternative Form of Regulation plan which relates to changes to flexibly priced services. If a party objects to a proposed change, it must "include the manner in which Frontier's proposal violates state law or Commission rules or otherwise is not in the public interest." In its objection, the Department is obligated to clearly demonstrate how the filing would result in the violation of state law, rule, or the public interest.

Discussion

The Department concludes its comments by stating that:

Frontier's proposal, to apply a monthly charge on the bills of those Digital Phone Bronze Service subscribers who fail to opt-out of receiving paper bills, does not comply with the requirements of the Minnesota Rules pt. 7810.1400, subpart 1. Therefore, the Department recommends disapproval of the proposal.

The Department bases its objection to Frontier's filing on the supposed violation by the filing of Minnesota Rules 7810.1400, subpart 1. However, the filing in no way violates the requirements of that rule. The Department has not asserted that Frontier's current bills (either paper or electronic) violate that rule. Indeed, they comply with the rule. The tariff filing at issue will not change the content or substance of either the paper or electronic bill, going forward. The Department has not identified any part of the rule's requirements that will be omitted or not complied with under the new filing.

Conclusion

As a basis for its objection, the Department must identify how the tariff filing violates state

law or Commission rules or otherwise is not in the public interest. In its comments, the Department has not made any credible assertion that Frontier's filing violates state law, rule, or the public interest. Therefore, the Department's objection should not be considered valid, and the Commission should not pursue or act upon it.

Dated June 21, 2017

Respectfully submitted,

FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS OF MINNESOTA, INC.

/s/ Scott Bohler

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