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August 9, 2006

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SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

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VIA FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION (605) 773-6818
AND US MAIL

Mr. Leo Disburg, Hearing Examiner
Bureau of Administration
Office of Hearing Examiners
210 East 4th Street
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: OHE File PUC 6-06

In the Matter of the Petitions of Armour Independent Telephone Company, Bridgewater-Canistota Independent Telephone Company, Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., Kadoka Telephone Company, Sioux Valley Telephone Company, Union Telephone Company and Vivian Telephone Company for Arbitration Pursuant to the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to Resolve Issues relating to Interconnection with WWC License, L.L.C. (PUC Dockets TC06-036, TC06-037, TC06-038, TC06-039, TC06-040, TC06-041, TC06-042)

Dear Mr. Disburg:

Please find enclosed the Golden West Companies' Reply to the August 4, 2006 Objection to the Petitioners' Affidavit submitted by Talbot Wieczorek on behalf of WWC License, L.L.C. If the August 16 conference call will not be suspended in light of the Motion for Reconsideration (currently before the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission) and the Affidavit for Change of Hearing Examiner, please let me know as soon as possible. Thank you for your assistance in this regard.

Sincerely,

CUTLER & DONAHOE, LLP



Meredith A. Moore
For the Firm

MAM/jlh

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Talbot Wieczorek (via U.S. Mail only)
Mr. Stephen Rowell (via U.S. Mail only)
Mr. Rich Coit (via U.S. Mail only)
Ms. Rolayne Wiest (via U.S. Mail only)
Ms. Sara Greff (via U.S. Mail only)
Mr. Julie Johnson (via U.S. Mail only)

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
OFFICE OF HEARING EXAMINERS

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AUG 17 2006

SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Petitions of Armour) Independent Telephone Company,) Bridgewater-Canistota Telephone Company,) Golden West Telecommunications) Cooperative, Inc., Kadoka Telephone) Company, Sioux Valley Telephone) Company, Union Telephone Company, and) Vivian Telephone Company (collectively the) "Golden West Companies") for Arbitration) Pursuant to the Telecommunications Act of) 1996 to Resolve Issues Relating to) Interconnection Agreements with WWC) License L.L.C.)	OHE File PUC 6-06 PUC Docket Nos. TC06-036 TC06-037 TC06-038 TC06-039 TC06-040 TC06-041 TC06-042
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**GOLDEN WEST COMPANIES' REPLY TO WWC LICENSE L.L.C.'S
OBJECTION TO AFFIDAVIT FILED BY THE PETITIONERS**

Come Now the Golden West Companies and hereby submit this Reply to the Objection filed by WWC License, L.L.C. ("Western Wireless") with the Office of Hearing Examiners on August 4, 2006. In its Objection, Western Wireless asked that the Office of Hearing Examiners request from the Petitioners "clarification of the individual hearing examiner that the Petitioners are seeking to strike and limit the Affidavit accordingly."

A careful reading of the Petitioners' Affidavit clearly shows that the Golden West Companies exercised only *one* challenge pursuant to SDCL § 1-26D-10. The terms of SDCL § 1-26d-10 provide that a party may request another hearing examiner, "within ten days after written notification . . . of the *appointment of a hearing examiner*["]." (emphasis added). To date, and as evidenced by correspondence from the Office of Hearing Examiners dated July 24 and 25, 2006, it is believed that only Ms. Julie Johnson has been appointed to act as the arbiter in the above-captioned matter.


Following the initial notification of Ms. Johnson's appointment, Leo Disburg, through correspondence dated July 26, 2006, seemingly confirmed that Ms. Johnson was the only hearing examiner to whom the above-captioned matter had been assigned. However, that correspondence further stated: "In the event Ms. Johnson is unavailable on the scheduled hearing date, Hillary Brady may be appointed in her place." No explanation was provided as to whether Ms. Johnson's potential unavailability on the hearing date would render her unavailable for the entirety of the proceedings or only for a particular date.

It does not appear from Mr. Disburg's correspondence as if any substitute appointment of Ms. Brady has been made at this time. However, under these unique circumstances, and in order to preserve the statutory right of the Golden West Companies under SDCL § 1-26D-10, to the extent that Mr. Disburg's July 26, 2006 correspondence carries with it a new or substituted appointment, effectively relieving Ms. Johnson of her duties in this matter, the Golden West Companies seek to exercise their statutory challenge with regard to Ms. Brady. Contrary to the assertion of Western Wireless, this is not an attempt to exercise two challenges where only one is allowed, but to ensure that the Golden West Companies have exercised their challenge as to the hearing examiner who has been appointed by the Office of Hearing Examiners to handle this matter at this time.

For these reasons, the Golden West Companies respectfully request that the Bureau of Administration, Office of Hearing Examiners appoint another hearing examiner in this matter.

Dated this 9th day of August, 2006.

GOLDEN WEST COMPANIES:



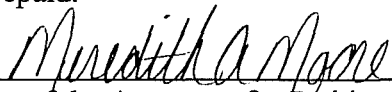
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

On this 9th day of August, 2006, a true and correct copy of the foregoing was served upon Talbot Wieczorek, of Gunderson, Palmer, Goodsell & Nelson, LLP, 440 Rushmore Road, Rapid City, SD 57701, Stephen B. Rowell, Mailstop 1269 B5-F11-C, One Allied Drive, Little Rock, AR 72202, legal counsel for WWC License L.L.C., Leo Disburg, Chief Hearing Examiner, Office of Hearing Examiners, 210 East 4th Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501, Rolayne Wiest of the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission at 500 East Capitol Avenue, 1st Floor, Pierre, South Dakota 57501, Sara Greff of the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission at 500 East Capitol Avenue, 1st Floor, Pierre, South Dakota 57501, and to Rich Coit, South Dakota Telecommunications Association, 320 East Capitol Avenue, Pierre, South Dakota 57501, by regular United States mail, first class postage prepaid.


One of the Attorneys for Petitioners