

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

**In the Matter of the Request of Qwest  
Corporation dba CenturyLink QC Study  
Area: 395145 for Certification Regarding its  
Use of Federal Universal Service Support**

**Docket No. TC17-033**

**QWEST CORPORATION DBA CENTURYLINK QC'S  
RESPONSE TO THE SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES  
COMMISSION STAFF'S DATA REQUESTS**

Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink QC ("CenturyLink"), for its responses to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Staff's Data Requests, states as follows:

1.1) Did all new customers receive information on Lifeline availability within 30 days of receiving service?

Response:

CenturyLink sends a welcome letter to new customers within 30 days of receiving service. The following language is included in the letter:

Telephone assistance plans help low-income citizens with the cost of telephone service. Eligibility is dependent upon income guidelines and other criteria. For more information, please call CenturyLink.

See attached Supplemental Exhibit A for a sample welcome letter. In addition, CenturyLink placed newspaper advertisements for residential Lifeline in November 2016. CenturyLink also maintains a website ([www.centurylink.com/lifeline](http://www.centurylink.com/lifeline)) with Lifeline applications and additional Lifeline and Link-Up resources and material. CenturyLink also maintains Lifeline information in its telephone directories and provides customers with an annual bill insert containing Lifeline information.

1.2) Does CenturyLink expect to complete its CAF II Obligation of 40% by the end of 2017?

Response:

Currently CenturyLink QC (South Dakota) is in the process of deploying facilities and enabling broadband in the CAF II areas. CenturyLink QC (South Dakota) anticipates reaching the 40% enablement benchmark by the end of 2017.

1.3) Refer to Attachment C.

a. Provide the same table for year 2018 projections

Response:

See Supplemental Confidential Exhibit B. The schedule is subject to change as the company has not entered fully into the 2018 budget cycle which will occur during fourth quarter 2017.

b. In Docket TC16-039, CenturyLink projected approximately \$15.8 million in capital expenditures in 2016, with approximately \$15 million in outside plant. Actual spending came in at approximately \$10.6 million with \$10.3 million attributable to outside plant. Provide explanations for any of the targets not being met in the listed wire centers on Attachment C.

Response:

Due to unforeseen delays, a number of 2016 projects were not completed in 2016 as forecasted and were carried into the 2017 calendar year for completion. Reasons for delay throughout the state were vendor equipment delivery delays and delays due to extra time involved to plan, engineer, and build extended fiber loops for customer access projects.

1.4) CenturyLink States that 2017 construction spending in high cost wire a center through April 2017 is approximately \$4.4M. Does CenturyLink expect to meet its projected goal of about \$15M for 2017?

Response:

The 2017 spend through June for high cost wire centers was approximately \$8.0M. Absent unforeseen circumstances, the company expects to fully utilize the \$15M in capital expenditures budgeted for 2017.

1.5) In the event that CenturyLink completes its projected build out for particular year, would CenturyLink seek to move forward with other potential projects slated for the next calendar year? Why or Why not.

Response:

Yes, it is possible that CenturyLink could move forward with projects slated for the following year if capital budget dollars are available for such activity. If capital budget dollars are not available, then moving forward with following year projects is not likely unless there is a capital budget amendment authorizing the use of funds.

1.6) In Regards to the Complaints Received in 2016.

- a. Explain how CenturyLink handles complaints received and how they are escalated.

Response:

Once a complaint is received from a regulatory agency, the complaint is assigned to a Customer Service Manager on the team that supports the specific State's regulatory agency. The assigned manager will open a file and document all company-required information, including a copy of the complaint. The manager investigates issue(s) and works to resolve those issues in a manner acceptable to the customer, the company, and in compliance with Tariffs and Commission rules and regulations. Once the issues are resolved, the outcome is provided to the regulatory agency in a timeframe and manner outlined in Commission rules and/or regulations. Any actions taken including responses to the Commission are documented.

- b. How many of the broadband complaints received dealt with customers seeking faster speeds?

Response:

There were 7 instances where customers indicated an issue with the speed of their internet connection. These customers were provided with options to upgrade their plans where available. Also, CAF II enablement should expand service capabilities in certain areas that will assist in providing higher speeds in rural South Dakota.

c. How long does it take to resolve the average complaint received?

Response:

CenturyLink strives to address customer complaints in an expeditious manner.

Responses to customer complaints are provided ordinarily within seven days which is well within the time prescribed by the commission rules. However, in some instances, the resolution of complaints may take longer depending on the type of complaint and work needed in finding a solution that is satisfactory for all parties.

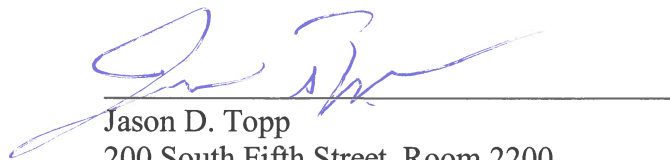
1.7 When looking to make upgrades or replace existing lines, does CenturyLink look at the amount of complaints received in determining where replacements should be considered? Is there a threshold that CenturyLink utilized before replacing a line that has received multiple service complaints?

Response:

CenturyLink takes customer complaints seriously and takes reasonable steps to resolve them satisfactorily for the customer. Complaints are one of the factors that are considered in the capital planning process to determine whether to upgrade or replace existing facilities.

Dated this 27th day of July, 2017.

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