

**BEFORE THE
SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

IN THE MATTER OF THE REQUEST OF NORTHERN VALLEY COMMUNICATIONS, L.L.C. FOR CERTIFICATION REGARDING ITS USE OF FEDERAL UNIVERSAL SERVICE SUPPORT.))))))	ANNUAL ETC CERTIFICATION FILING
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Northern Valley Communications, L.L.C. (the “Company”), by and through its attorney, makes this filing to seek certification from the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (the “Commission”) as is required under 47 C.F.R. § 54.314 and to comply with the provisions of ARSD §§ 20:10:32:52 and 20:10:32:54 of the Commission’s rules pertaining to eligible telecommunications carriers (“ETCs”).

In accordance with 47 C.F.R. § 54.314, federal universal service support provided to carriers pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 54.305, 54.307, 54.312, 54.800 through 54.809 and/or 54.901 through 54.903 and/or Part 36, Subpart F (interstate access support, interstate common line support, support provided to competitive eligible telecommunications carriers, Connect America Fund support, high-cost loop support, safety net additive support and safety valve support) will be made available only if the State Commission files the requisite annual certification with the FCC and USAC. The certification required specifically for rural carriers to receive federal universal service support for all four quarters during calendar year 2018 is currently due to be filed with the FCC and USAC on or before October 1, 2017. The certification may be presented to these entities in the form of a letter from the State Commission. The letter must identify which carriers in the State are eligible to receive federal support during the 12-month period and must certify that the carriers listed will only use the support for the provision, maintenance and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended.

As part of its annual request to the Commission for certification, the Company provides the following information:

1. The Company is a rural competitive local exchange carrier that has previously been designated by this Commission as an ETC. The Company provides local exchange telephone services, including all of the essential services that are included in the federal definition of universal service, to approximately 4,330 access lines within its local exchange service area in South Dakota.

2. The provisions of ARSD §§ 20:10:32:54 addressing the annual “Certification requirements” set forth by this Commission indicate in part that the ETC must show “how much universal service support was received.” Accordingly, the Company’s 2016 federal universal service receipts are reflected on Exhibit A hereto (presented as part of the Company’s “Progress Report” and §§ 20:10:32:54(2)). This same Exhibit also shows total expenditures of the Company in 2016 related to the provision, maintenance and upgrading of the facilities and services that are supported by federal universal service funding. In addition, to the extent changes have occurred, to date, with respect to the Company’s planned 2017 investments noted in last year’s two-year plan, the changes are referenced in that Exhibit. Estimates of the expenditures to be made by the

Company for calendar year 2018, related to the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services supported by federal universal service, are provided on Exhibit B hereto as part of the Company's current Two-Year Plan associated with §§ 20:10:32:54(1). Consistent with federal universal service principles, the Company will use federal universal service amounts received in 2018 to offset a portion of these 2018 expenditures. This use of federal universal service support will enable the Company to: (1) maintain rates for its local exchange services that are affordable and reasonably comparable to rates being charged for the same services in urban areas; and (2) to upgrade its telecommunications facilities and equipment as necessary to meet evolving service requirements, including those related to broadband services, and maintain high quality service. The use of federal universal service support for these purposes is clearly consistent with the federal universal service provisions.

3. In addition to the information included in Exhibits A and B, also attached as Exhibit C is included with this filing and contains a copy of Northern Valley Communications, L.L.C.'s FCC Form 481 as required by 47 C.F.R. § 54.313 and 54.422. Exhibit C provides the requirements associated with §§ 20:10:32:54(3), 20:10:32:54(4) and 20:10:32:54(5), on lines 220, 300-330 and 400-450 of Form 481 respectively.

4. Exhibit D is a document containing other certifications, including those required under the provisions of ARSD §§ 20:10:32:54(6) and 20:10:32:54(7). §§ 20:10:32:54(8) and 20:10:32:54(9) were waived in their entirety as part of PUC docket TC13-027.

5. Based on all of the foregoing information, including the information provided on Exhibits A, B, C and D, the Company requests that this Commission issue an appropriate certification to the FCC and USAC indicating that Northern Valley Communications, L.L.C. is in compliance with 47 U.S.C. § 254(e) and should receive all federal universal service support determined for distribution to the Company in 2018. In order to ensure that this certification is issued to the FCC prior to October 1, 2017, the Company would further ask the Commission to expedite the process that is initiated based on this filing.

Dated this 23rd day of June, 2017.

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