

**BEFORE THE
SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

IN THE MATTER OF THE REQUEST OF)	
VALLEY TELEPHONE COMPANY FOR)	
CERTIFICATION REGARDING ITS USE)	ANNUAL ETC CERTIFICATION
OF FEDERAL UNIVERSAL SERVICE)	FILING
SUPPORT.)	

Valley Telephone Company (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 54.904 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 value 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 2019 is currently due to be filed with the FCC and USAC on or before October 1, 2018. 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 telephone company 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 177 access lines within its established rural service area in South Dakota.

2. The provisions of ARSD §§ 20:10:32:54 addressing the annual “Certification requirements” adopted by this Commission indicate in part that the ETC must show “how much universal service support was received.” Accordingly, the Company’s 2017 federal universal service receipts are reflected on Exhibit A hereto (presented as part of the Company’s “Progress Report” which includes information required by ARSD § 20:10:32:54(2)). Exhibit A also shows total expenditures made by the Company in 2017 relating to the provision, maintenance and upgrading of facilities and services for which universal service support is intended under federal law. In addition, to the extent that the Company’s actual capital investments in 2017 differ from the 2017 planned investment information earlier provided to this Commission, the differences are noted and discussed in Exhibit B – Two Year Plan.

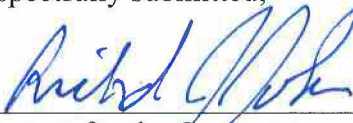
3. In 2015, the Company provided, as part of its annual certification filing, a copy of its 2015 "Form 481" filed with the FCC pursuant to 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.313 and 54.422 which included a "five-year service quality improvement plan". This five-year plan provided estimates of expenditures to be made by the Company for calendar years 2015 through 2019, related to the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which universal service support is intended. A Two-Year Plan is now provided to this Commission as part of Exhibit B. The Company is using federal universal service support amounts received in 2018 to meet the objectives identified in its service quality improvement plans and will continue to do so with respect to universal service amounts received in 2019. 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.

4. As noted, attached is Exhibit C containing those certifications required under the provisions of ARSD §§ 20:10:32:54(6) and 20:10:32:54(7). The remaining ETC certification rule provisions found in ARSD §§ 20:10:32:54(8) and 20:10:32:54(9) have by Order been waived by this Commission.

5. Based on all of the foregoing information, including all information provided within Exhibits A, B and C (attached hereto), the Company requests that this Commission issue an appropriate certification to the FCC and USAC indicating that *Valley Telephone Company* 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 2019. In order to ensure that this certification is issued to the FCC prior to October 1, 2018, the Company would further ask the Commission to expedite these proceedings, to the extent needed to meet such deadline.

Dated: June 29, 2018

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for the Company