

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT FILED)	ORDER FINDING
BY LORETTA SPEAR, HILL CITY, SOUTH)	PROBABLE CAUSE AND
DAKOTA, AGAINST U S WEST)	NOTICE REQUIRING
COMMUNICATIONS, INC. REGARDING)	ANSWER
UPDATING LINES)	TC98-155

On September 3, 1998, the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) received a complaint filed by Loretta Spear, Hill City, South Dakota, against U S WEST Communications, Inc. (U S WEST). Ms. Spear stated, "In retrospect our telephone problems began in the spring of this year (1998). Starting with noisy lines (static) and later followed by temporary interruptions in service lasting anywhere from a few minutes to a couple of hours. These were not reported to repair service as the service would come back on. During this time the volume on the callers voice would fluctuate. Several times the telephone would ring and when I answered, it would be a dead line. Approximately 4 weeks ago the line went dead for a day and I called repair service. By the time the repair man came, the phone had started to work again. He did work on the service but stated the equipment is old. A week later the phone went dead again. (Friday, the day before the strike started) I called repair service again. This time supervisory personnel came out on a Sunday and worked on the line. I also advised him that our Caller ID service which we had just purchased was not working. He stated we did not have that service as the equipment was old and not available to us. He also stated that the equipment upgrade was on the books but not enough money to do the work now. Perhaps next year. When calling to cancel Caller ID the customer service office said that we should have that service available to us, but would cancel our order and issue credit. I checked with repair service once again and was told by electronic voice that we might expect to have service by September 5. That will be 3 weeks without telephone service." Ms. Spears is requesting that credit be given for Caller ID and 3 weeks without telephone service. She is also requesting resolution to updating telephone service in the area.

Pursuant to ARSD 20:10:01:08.01 and 20:10:01:09, if a complaint cannot be settled without formal action, the Commission shall determine if the complaint shows probable cause of an unlawful or unreasonable act, rate, practice or omission to go forward with the complaint.

On October 20, 1998, at a duly noticed meeting, Ms. Spears explained her complaint to the Commission. U S WEST stated that it had no plans at this time to update the telephone system in this area. Commission Staff recommended a finding of probable cause.

The Commission finds that it has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL 49-13-1, 49-13-4, 49-13-13, 49-13-14.1, 49-31-3, 49-31-7, 49-31-7.1, 49-31-11, 49-31-60 through 49-31-68, inclusive, and ARSD 20:10:01:08.01 and 20:10:01:09. The Commission voted unanimously to find probable cause. It is therefore

ORDERED, that pursuant to ARSD 20:10:01:09, the Commission finds that there is probable cause of an unlawful or unreasonable act, rate, practice, or omission and that the complaint shall be forwarded to U S WEST and U S WEST shall file with the Commission its answer in writing within twenty (20) days of service of this order.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 26th day of October, 1998.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, by facsimile or by first class mail, in properly addressed envelopes, with charges prepaid thereon.
By: <u><i>William Kalbo</i></u>
Date: <u>10/27/98</u>
(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

James A. Burg
JAMES A. BURG, Chairman

Pam Nelson
PAM NELSON, Commissioner

Laska Schoenfelder
LASKA SCHOENFELDER, Commissioner