

STATE OF MICHIGAN

BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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In the matter, on the Commission’s own motion, to)	
consider Ameritech Michigan’s compliance with)	
the competitive checklist in Section 271 of the)	Case No. U-12320
federal Telecommunications Act of 1996.)	
_____)	

In the matter, on the Commission’s own motion, to)	
commence a collaborative proceeding to monitor and)	
facilitate implementation of Accessible Letters issued)	Case No. U-14447
by SBC Michigan and Verizon.)	
_____)	

At the February 28, 2005 meeting of the Michigan Public Service Commission in Lansing, Michigan.

PRESENT: Hon. J. Peter Lark, Chair
Hon. Robert B. Nelson, Commissioner
Hon. Laura Chappelle, Commissioner

ORDER COMMENCING A COLLABORATIVE PROCEEDING

On February 16, 2005, MCImetro Access Transmission Services LLC (MCImetro), which is a competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) pursuant to the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, 47 USC 251 et seq. (FTA), filed objections to certain proposals and pronouncements made in five “Accessible Letters” dated February 10 and 11, 2005 by SBC Michigan (SBC), which is an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) under the FTA. Other CLECs quickly followed suit.

On February 18, 2005, LDMI Telecommunications, Inc. (LDMI), also filed objections to the five Accessible Letters.

On February 23, 2005, Talk America Inc., filed objections to one of the five Accessible Letters.

On February 23, 2005, TelNet Worldwide, Inc., Quick Communications, Inc. d/b/a Quick Connect USA, Superior Technologies, Inc. d/b/a/ Superior Spectrum, Inc., CMC Telecom, Inc., Grid4 Communications, Inc., and Zenk Group Ltd. d/b/a Planet Access filed comments in support of the objections raised by MCImetro and LDMI.

On February 23, 2005, XO Communications, Inc. (XO), filed objections to one of the five Accessible Letters.

On February 23, 2005, SBC filed its response to the objections filed by MCImetro and LDMI.

Accessible Letter No. CLECAM05-037 (AL-37), which is dated February 10, 2005, states that SBC will be withdrawing its wholesale unbundled network element (UNE) tariffs “beginning as early as March 10, 2005.” AL-37, p.1. Accessible Letter No. CLECALL05-017 (AL-17) and Accessible Letter No. CLECALL05-018 (AL-18), which are each dated February 11, 2005, state that SBC will not accept new, migration, or move local service requests (LSRs) for mass market unbundled local switching (ULS) and unbundled network element-platform (UNE-P) on or after March 11, 2005, notwithstanding the terms of any interconnection agreements or applicable tariffs. In AL-18, SBC additionally states that effective March 11, 2005, it will begin charging CLECs a \$1 surcharge for mass market ULS and UNE-P. Accessible Letter No. CLECALL05-019 (AL-19) and Accessible Letter No. CLECALL05-020 (AL-20), which are each dated February 11, 2005, state that as of March 11, 2005 SBC will no longer accept new, migration, or move LSRs for certain DS1 and DS3 high capacity loops, DS1 and DS3 dedicated transport, dark fiber transport, and dark fiber loops. Also, in AL-20, SBC states that beginning March 11, 2005, it will be

charging increased rates for the embedded base of DS1 and DS3 high capacity loops, DS1 and DS3 dedicated transport, dark fiber transport, and dark fiber loops.¹

The CLECs maintain that SBC has no unilateral right to change its wholesale tariffs. According to them, the Commission established a procedure in Case No. U-12320 whereby SBC must provide the CLECs with a 30-day notice of its intent to change any of its tariff provisions. The CLECs also point out that the Commission allowed a CLEC to object to SBC's proposed actions within two weeks of SBC's notice. In short, the CLECs insist that SBC may not unilaterally revise the rates, terms, and conditions under which SBC provisions wholesale telephone services. The CLECs seek a Commission order (1) establishing a proceeding to address the changes proposed by SBC, (2) prohibiting SBC from withdrawing its wholesale tariff until completion of this proceeding, (3) compelling SBC to honor its tariffs and interconnection agreements as they presently exist, (4) barring SBC from enforcing or implementing the Accessibility Letters until issuance of a final order in this proceeding, (5) directing SBC to continue to accept and provision new, migration, or move LSRs for mass market unbundled local switching (ULS) and unbundled network element-platform (UNE-P) until further order of the Commission, (6) directing SBC to continue to accept and provision new, migration, or move LSRs for certain DS1 and DS3 high capacity loops, DS1 and DS3 dedicated transport, dark fiber transport, and dark fiber loops until further order of the Commission, and directing SBC not to increase the rates it charges for UNE-P, DS1 and DS3 high capacity loops, DS1 and DS3 dedicated transport, dark fiber transport, and dark fiber loops until further order of the Commission.

¹Although not contained in the record of the Case No. U-12320 docket, which is limited to consideration of issues related to Ameritech Michigan's compliance with the competitive checklist in Section 271 of the FTA, the Commission is also aware that Verizon has issued at least two similar Accessible Letters. The arguments raised by the CLECs with regard to SBC's proposed actions apply with equal force to the actions proposed by Verizon.

SBC responds by arguing that the modifications set forth in its Accessibility Letters are fully consistent with the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) recent February 4, 2005 order regarding unbundling obligations of ILECs² and must therefore be honored by the CLECs and the Commission. According to SBC, the CLECs' objections are directly contrary to the recent rulings of the FCC. SBC states that the FCC has established a nationwide bar on unbundling as follows:

1. An ILEC is not required to provide access to local circuit switching on an unbundled basis to requesting telecommunications carriers for the purpose of serving end-user customers using DS0 capacity loops. 47 C.F.R. § 51.319(d)(2)(i).
2. Requesting carriers may not obtain new local switching as an UNE. *Id.* § 51.319(d)(2)(iii).
3. ILECs have no obligation to provide CLECs with unbundled access to mass market local circuit switching. *TRO Remand Order* ¶ 5.
4. The FCC's transition plan does not permit CLECs to add new switching UNEs. *Id.*
5. The FCC did not impose a Section 251 unbundling requirement for mass market local circuit switching nationwide. *Id.* ¶ 199.
6. The FCC found that the disincentives to investment posed by the availability of unbundled switching, in combination with unbundled loops and shared transport, justify a nationwide bar on such unbundling. *Id.* ¶ 204.
7. The FCC found that continued availability of unbundled mass market switching would impose significant costs in the form of decreased investment incentives, and therefore determined not to unbundle that network element. *Id.* ¶ 210.
8. The FCC found that unbundling would seriously undermine infrastructure investment and hinder the development of genuine, facilities-based competition. *Id.* ¶ 218.

According to SBC, the FCC's unbundling bar applies with equal force to network elements, such as shared transport, which can only be provided in conjunction with switching. SBC also

²In the Matter of Unbundled Access to Network Elements, WC Docket No. 04-313 and Review of the Section 251 Unbundling Obligations of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers, CC Docket No. 01-338. (*TRO Remand Order*).

asserts that the FCC reached a similar result with regard to signaling (§ 544) and for certain databases used in routing calls (§ 551). Therefore, SBC maintains that, given the FCC's bar on unbundled switching, it cannot be forced to provide unbundled access to any switch-related UNEs.

SBC next argues that the Commission should reject the CLECs' efforts to link their objections to Case No. U-12320 and Section 271 of the FTA. According to SBC, the Commission has no decision making authority under Section 271. Further, SBC maintains that Section 271 focuses on "just, reasonable, and non-discriminatory" pricing rather than on total element long run incremental cost (TELRIC) pricing, which it claims will be perpetuated by adoption of the CLECs' objections. Further, SBC insists that Section 271 provides no support for continuing its required provision of UNE combinations. Finally, SBC argues that the Commission and the CLECs are powerless to ignore the FCC's holdings or otherwise delay SBC's implementation of the FCC's pricing determinations.

The Commission finds that the objections filed by the CLECs have merit. In Paragraph No. 233 of the FCC's February 4 order, the FCC stated:

We expect that incumbent LECs and competing carriers will implement the Commission's findings as directed by section 252 of the Act. *Thus, carriers must implement changes to their interconnection agreements consistent with our conclusions in this Order.* We note that the failure of an incumbent LEC or a competitive LEC to negotiate in good faith under section 251(c)(1) of the Act and our implementing rules may subject that party to enforcement action. Thus, the incumbent LEC and competitive LEC must negotiate in good faith regarding any rates, terms, and conditions necessary to implement our rule changes. We expect that parties to the negotiating process will not unreasonably delay implementation of the conclusions adopted in this Order. *We encourage the state commissions to monitor this area closely to ensure that parties do not engage in unnecessary delay.* Paragraph No. 233 (Emphasis added).

The emphasized portion of Paragraph No. 233 indicates that the FCC did not contemplate that ILECs may unilaterally dictate to CLECs the changes to their interconnection agreements necessary to implement the FCC's findings in the February 4 order. It also clearly indicates that

this Commission has an important role in the process by which ILECs and CLECs resolve their differences through good faith negotiations. Indeed, the Commission was specifically encouraged by the FCC to monitor implementation of the Accessible Letters issued by SBC and Verizon to ensure that parties do not engage in unnecessary delay. In addition, Paragraph No. 234 of the FCC's order indicates that SBC must immediately process a request for access to a dedicated transport or high capacity loop UNE and it can challenge the provision of such UNEs "through the dispute resolution procedures provided for in its interconnection agreements."

Given the urgency of the circumstances, the Commission finds that it should immediately commence a collaborative process for implementation of Accessible Letters issued by SBC Michigan and Verizon. In so doing, the Commission observes that the change of law provisions contained in the parties' interconnection agreements must be followed.

To avoid confusion, the Commission finds that a new proceeding that is devoted specifically to its monitoring and facilitating of the implementation of the Accessible Letters issued by SBC and Verizon should be commenced. Docket items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 that currently appear in Case No. U-12320 should be placed into the docket file for Case No. U-14447. All additional pleadings related to implementation of Accessible Letters issued by SBC and Verizon should also be placed solely in the docket for Case No. U-14447.

The Commission intends that the collaborative proceeding should be limited in scope and duration. The Commission has selected the Director of its Telecommunications Division, Orjiakor Isiogu, to oversee all collaborative efforts. The Commission also directs that the collaborative process be conducted in a manner that will bring it to a successful end in no more than 45 days.

During the time that the collaborative process is ongoing, the Commission directs that SBC and Verizon may bill the CLECs at the rate effective March 11, 2005, however, the ILECs may

not take any collection actions against the CLECs for the portion of the bill caused by the increase on March 11, 2005. To ensure that there will be no undue benefit to the CLECs or harm to the ILECs due to the delay associated with the collaborative process, the Commission will also direct that there will be a true-up proceeding at the end of the collaborative process that will determine how rates and charges will be adjusted retroactively to March 11, 2005.³

The Commission has selected Case No. U-14447 for participation in its Electronic Filings Program. The Commission recognizes that all filers may not have the computer equipment or access to the Internet necessary to submit documents electronically. Therefore, filers may submit documents in the traditional paper format and mail them to the: Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, 6545 Mercantile Way, P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, Michigan 48909. Otherwise, all documents filed in this case must be submitted in both paper and electronic versions. An original and four paper copies and an electronic copy in the portable document format (PDF) should be filed with the Commission. Requirements and instructions for filing electronic documents can be found in the Electronic Filings Users Manual at: <http://efile.mpsc.cis.state.mi.us/efile/usersmanual.pdf>. The application for account and letter of assurance are located at <http://efile.mpsc.cis.state.mi.us/efile/help>. You may contact the Commission Staff at (517) 241-6170 or by e-mail at mpscfilecases@michigan.gov with questions and to obtain access privileges prior to filing.

The Commission FINDS that:

a. Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1991 PA 179, as amended, MCL 484.2101 et seq.; the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, 47 USC 151

³See, Paragraph 228 and footnote 630 of the FCC's February 4, 2005 order.

et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

b. A collaborative process should be commenced in Case No. U-14447 for monitoring and facilitating the implementation of the Accessible Letters issued by SBC and Verizon.

c. Pending completion of the collaborative process, SBC and Verizon may bill the CLECs a the rate effective March 11, 2005, however, SBC and Verizon may not take any collection actions against the CLECs for the portion of the bill caused by the increase on March 11, 2005.

d. Following completion of the collaborative process, a true-up proceeding should be conducted to adjust rates and charges retroactively to March 11, 2005.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

A. A collaborative process is commenced in Case No. U-14447 for monitoring and facilitating the implementation of the Accessible Letters issued by SBC Michigan and Verizon.

B. Pending completion of the collaborative process and further order of the Commission, SBC Michigan and Verizon shall refraining from collecting any billed rate arising from implementation of any of the changes described in their Accessible Letters.

The Commission reserves jurisdiction and may issue further orders as necessary.

MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

/s/ J. Peter Lark

Chair

(S E A L)

/s/ Robert B. Nelson

Commissioner

/s/ Laura Chappelle

Commissioner

By its action of February 28, 2005.

/s/ Mary Jo Kunkle

Its Executive Secretary

The Commission reserves jurisdiction and may issue further orders as necessary.

MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Chair

Commissioner

Commissioner

By its action of February 28, 2005.

Its Executive Secretary