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January 23, 2017

Via Electronic and U.S. Mail

Ms. Debra A. Howland, Executive Director
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301

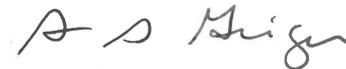
***Re: DT 16-872 - Joint Petition for Findings in Furtherance of the
Acquisition of FairPoint Communications, Inc. and its New Hampshire
Operating Subsidiaries by Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc.***

Dear Ms. Howland:

Enclosed for filing with the Commission in the above-captioned docket please find an original and six (6) copies of an Affidavit of Publication submitted on behalf of Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc.

Please contact me if there are any questions about this filing. Thank you for your assistance.

Very truly yours,



Susan S. Geiger

cc: Service List (electronic mail)
1673622_1

**THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
BEFORE THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

DT 16-872

**CONSOLIDATED COMMUNICATIONS HOLDINGS, INC.
Joint Petition for Findings in Furtherance of the Acquisition of
FairPoint Communications, Inc. and its New Hampshire Operating Subsidiaries by
Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc.**

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

NOW COMES Susan S. Geiger, upon oath, being duly sworn, and states as follows:

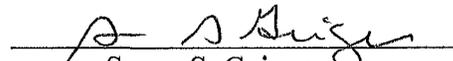
1. I represent Consolidate Communications Holdings, Inc. (“Consolidated” or “CCHI”) in the above-captioned docket which involves Consolidated’s proposed acquisition of FairPoint Communications Inc. (“FairPoint”).
2. On January 17, 2017, the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (“the Commission”) issued an Order of Notice in the above-captioned docket, which, *inter alia*, directed Consolidated to publish a copy of said Order of Notice “no later than January 23, 2017, in a newspaper with general circulation in those portions of the state in which its operations are conducted...”
3. Although Consolidated does not currently operate within the State of New Hampshire, on behalf of Consolidated, I caused a copy of the said Order of Notice to be published on January 20, 2017 in the Union Leader, a newspaper with statewide/general circulation.

4. Attached is a true and accurate copy of the above-referenced publication which appeared in the Union Leader on January 20, 2017.

5. The Order of Notice also directed Consolidated to document such publication by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before January 27, 2017. As indicated by the date below, this Affidavit complies with said Order.

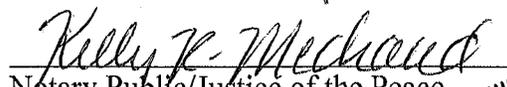
6. A copy of this Affidavit is being provided via e-mail to the persons named on this docket's Service List.

Dated this 23rd day of January, 2017.


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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
COUNTY OF MERRIMACK

On this 23rd day of January, 2017, the above-named Susan S. Geiger personally appeared before me and subscribed and swore to the foregoing.


Notary Public/Justice of the Peace
My Commission Expires: 10-21-2020



in this matter, which may affect you without your input.

BY ORDER OF THE COURT
December 21, 2016
LoriAnne Hensel, Clerk of Court
(UL - Jan. 13, 20, 27)

Legal Notice

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
DT 16-872

CONSOLIDATED COMMUNICATIONS
HOLDINGS, INC.

Joint Petition for Findings in
Furtherance of the Acquisition of
FairPoint Communications, Inc. and Its
New Hampshire Operating Subsidiaries
by Consolidated Communications
Holdings, Inc.

ORDER OF NOTICE

On December 29, 2016, Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc. (CCHI) and FairPoint Communications, Inc. (FCI) filed a Joint Petition for Findings in Furtherance of the Acquisition of FairPoint Communications, Inc., and Its New Hampshire Operating Subsidiaries by Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc. (Joint Petition).

The Joint Petition requests that the Commission make the required findings under RSA 374:30, II, and any other applicable statutory provisions, to permit CCHI and FCI to consummate their merger and acquisition transaction. As a result of that proposed transaction, Consolidated Communications, Inc. (CCI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of CCHI, would become the 100% owner of FCI, which in turn is the owner of Northern New England Telephone Operations, LLC d/b/a FairPoint Communications-NNE (FairPoint) and Northland Telephone Company of Maine, Inc. (Northland). Both FairPoint and Northland are incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) in New Hampshire, and both are deemed to be "excepted local exchange carriers" under RSA 362:7, I (c). FairPoint also retains certain obligations under federal and state law as a Regional Bell Operating Company.

The Commission will review the proposed merger and acquisition transaction described in the Joint Petition under RSA 374:30, II to determine whether the utility to which the transfer is proposed to be made is technically, managerially, and financially capable of maintaining the obligations of an ILEC as set forth in RSA 362:8 and RSA 374:22-p. These obligations include the provision of basic telephone service throughout the ILEC's franchise territory at rates that are generally capped for a defined period of time, as well as obligations that arise pursuant to the Commission's authority under the federal Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and obligations related to the provision of services to competitive local exchange carriers, interexchange carriers, and wireless carriers, regardless of technology.

The Joint Petition and subsequent docket filings, other than any information for which confidential treatment is requested of or granted by the Commission, will be posted to the Commission's website at <http://www.puc.nh.gov/Regulatory/Docketbk/2016/16-872.html>.

The Joint Petition raises, *inter alia*,

The Joint Petition raises, *inter alia*, issues related to whether the proposed merger and acquisition transaction effectively will result in the transfer of FairPoint and Northland to a utility that has the technical, managerial, and financial capability to maintain the obligations of an ILEC as set forth in RSA 362:8 and RSA 374:22-p.

Each party has the right to have an attorney represent the party at the party's own expense.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED, that a Prehearing Conference, pursuant to N.H. Code Admin. Rules Puc 203.15, be held before the Commission located at 21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire, on February 1, 2017 at 1:00 p.m., at which each party will provide a preliminary statement of its position with regard to relevant matters and any of the issues set forth in N.H. Code Admin. Rules Puc 203.15; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that, immediately following the Prehearing Conference, CCHI, FCI, Commission Staff, and Interveners hold a Technical Session to review the Joint Petition and other relevant matters and to develop a procedural schedule for the proceeding; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to N.H. Code Admin. Rules Puc 203.12, CCHI shall notify all persons desiring to be heard at this hearing by publishing a copy of this Order of Notice no later than January 23, 2017, in a newspaper with general circulation in those portions of the state in which its operations are conducted, and with publication to be documented by affidavit filed with the Commission on or before January 27, 2017; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that consistent with N.H. Code Admin. Rules Puc 203.17 and Puc 203.02, any party seeking to intervene in the proceeding shall submit to the Commission seven copies of a petition to intervene, with copies sent to the Office of the Consumer Advocate and all parties listed on the Commission's service list for this proceeding, on or before January 27, 2017, such petition stating the facts demonstrating how its rights, duties, privileges, immunities, or other substantial interest may be affected by the proceeding, as required by N.H. Code Admin. Rules Puc 203.17 and RSA 541-A:32, I (b); and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that any party objecting to a petition to intervene make said objection on or before February 1, 2017.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this seventeenth day of January, 2017.

Debra A. Howland
Executive Director

Individuals needing assistance or auxiliary communication aids due to sensory impairment or other disability should contact the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, NHPUC, 21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2429; 603-271-2431; TDD Access: Relay N.H. 1-800-735-2964. Notification or the need for assistance should be made one week prior to the scheduled event.

(UL - Jan. 20)