

DT 02-218

RELAY NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Order Directing Local Exchange Carriers to Adjust Basic
Exchange Rates for Telecommunications Relay Service**

O R D E R N O. 24,091

December 6, 2002

On November 8, 1991, Sprint began providing Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) in New Hampshire to enable hearing people and people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired to communicate with one another over the telephone. The cost of operating TRS is included in basic exchange rates.

By Order No. 22,850 (February 17, 1998), the Commission set the amount collected per line at 8 cents per access line. That Order had the effect of replenishing the fund to levels that exceeded immediate program needs and has thus produced a surplus. Due to the magnitude of the surplus, Commission Staff examined program income and expenses. The analysis demonstrates that program costs at the current time are fractionally less than 6 cents per access line per month (per access line per month). Therefore, the program could sustain operations at a rate of 6 cents per access line per month. However, to reduce the surplus rapidly, Staff recommended that the rate temporarily be reduced to 2 cents per access line per month and 1 cent per access line per month for seasonal rates. According to Staff, this rate

would have the effect of reducing the surplus within approximately two and one half years to an amount capable of covering the largest monthly expenditure. After that period, staff recommended the rate rise to 6 cents per access line per month and 3 cents per access line per month for seasonal rates to fund program requirements.

We will accept Staff's recommendation to reduce the rate. However, to provide a more stable rate over time, we will reduce the amount from 8 cents per access line per month to 4 cents per access line per month and 2 cents per access line per month for seasonal rates. Although at 4 cents the surplus will be drawn down more slowly, this produces rate stability in that rates will not have to be increased as much or as quickly as they would under Staff's plan. We direct Staff to monitor the balance in the fund and inform us before the balance reaches an amount approximately equal to two months' program expenditure if the monthly revenue being collected does not cover the monthly program cost at that time.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED, that the amount collected for TRS in basic exchange rates be decreased by all New Hampshire local exchange carriers (LECs) from 8 cents per month to 4 cents per month and the amount collected in seasonal rates,

during the off season, if applicable, be decreased from 4 cents per month to 2 cents per month; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that the incumbent local exchange carriers file revised tariff pages and that facilities-based competitive local exchange carriers file revised price sheets reflecting this change for effect with the first full billing cycle on or after February 1, 2003, in accordance with N.H. Admin. Rules, Puc 1600 and 1300; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that all local exchange carriers notify customers of these changes with a bill insert provided concurrently with the changes.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this sixth day of December, 2002.

Thomas B. Getz
Chairman

Susan S. Geiger
Commissioner

Nancy Brockway
Commissioner

Attested by:

Debra A. Howland
Executive Director & Secretary