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Report No. CC 98-__ ACTION IN DOCKET CASE December 22, 1998

COMPREHENSIVE MONITORING REPORT ON UNIVERSAL SERVICE RELEASED (CC DOCKET NO. 98-202)

The staff of the Federal-State Joint Board on universal service has released its most recent Monitoring Report on Universal Service. The Commission has, at the same time, issued a Public Notice describing the universal service monitoring program and changes made in that program following the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

A monitoring program was established in the mid-1980's, at the recommendation of the separations Joint Board, to track trends related to universal service and related matters. Since then the Joint Board Staff has prepared Monitoring Reports at least once a year--a compendium of hundreds of pages of statistical data on subscribership and penetration, loop costs, separations factors, universal service fund payments, etc. The latest report incorporates a few new sections related to the universal service support mechanisms, reflecting the change in the publication of this report from the separations Joint Board staff to the universal service Joint Board staff.

The Monitoring Report is unique in several ways. First, it is the only document that includes information on every local telephone company in the nation. Second, the FCC has not imposed any new reporting burdens on any company to generate the information. Instead it uses data which the National Exchange Carrier Association collects for its own needs, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other organizations, and publicly available ARMIS submissions. A third characteristic of the monitoring reports is that they are staff reports. They are not intended to be policy documents and contain only enough text to describe the tables.

The Report released today presents current data in each of the eleven subject categories selected for monitoring: 1) industry revenues and contributions; 2) low income support; 3) high cost support; 4) schools and libraries support; 5) rural health care support; 6) subscribership and penetration; 7) rates and price indices; 8) network usage and growth; 9) quality of service; 10) infrastructure; and 11) revenues, expenses and investment.

A copy of the Report is available for inspection in the Common Carrier Bureau reference room, 2000 M Street, NW, Room 575. The Report can be downloaded from the **FCC-State Link** internet site, which can be reached at <http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/stats> on the World Wide Web. Names for print image files: mr98-all.pdf for the whole report, mr98-pn.pdf for the public notice, and mr98-0.pdf, mr98-1.pdf, ..., mr98-11.pdf for the introduction and each section separately. Names for condensed files in WordPerfect 5.1 and Lotus 123 .wk4 format: mr98-pn.zip, mr98-0.zip, mr98-1.zip, ..., mr98-11.zip. The report and public notice can also be downloaded from the **FCC-State Link** computer bulletin board system by calling (202) 418-0241 with a computer modem.

Copies of the Report are available for purchase from the Commission's duplicating contractor, International Transcription Service, Inc. (ITS) at (202) 857-3800.

For further information contact Alexander Belinfante at (202) 418-0944.

MONITORING REPORT

CC DOCKET NO. 98-202

DECEMBER 1998

Prepared by Federal and State Staff for the

Federal-State Joint Board in

CC Docket No. 96-45

This report is available for reference in the Common Carrier Bureau Reference Room, 2000 M Street NW, Room 575, Federal Communications Commission, Washington, DC 20554. Phone (202) 418-1370. Copies may be purchased by calling International Transcription Services, Inc. at (202) 857-3800. The report can also be downloaded from the **FCC-State Link** internet site, which can be reached at <http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/stats> on the World Wide Web. Names for print image files: mr98-all.pdf for the whole report and mr98-0.pdf, mr98-1.pdf, ... , mr98-11.pdf for the introduction and each section separately. Names for condensed files in WordPerfect 5.1 and Lotus 123 .wk4 format: mr98-0.zip, mr98-1.zip, ... , mr98-11.zip. The report can also be downloaded from the **FCC-State Link** computer bulletin board system at (202) 418-0241.

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Monitoring Report
CC Docket No. 98-202
December 1998

Introduction and Summary

This is the first report in a series of reports monitoring the impact of universal service support mechanisms, and the methods used to finance them. These mechanisms were adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (Commission), based on recommendations from the Federal-State Joint Board in CC Docket No. 96-45 (Universal Service Joint Board). These reports are part of a new monitoring program created by the Commission in 1997¹ to replace the similar program in CC Docket No. 87-339. This new program incorporates most of the information that was collected under the previous program, and also new materials from the reports of the administrator of the universal service support mechanisms, the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). To enhance our monitoring ability, we have created a new open docket² which allows data, materials, comments, and studies to be submitted at any time.

The monitoring program has proven to be valuable, not only as a report on the effects of regulatory changes, but also as a complete census of all incumbent local exchange carriers. Because smaller carriers generally are exempt from most Commission reporting requirements, the Monitoring Report incorporates data from several sources, including the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA) and USAC. NECA, at the direction of the Commission, collects information in order to administer the access charge pools and to provide information to USAC to help administer the Universal Service Fund. USAC also collects information from all eligible carriers to administer the universal service support mechanisms. The Monitoring Report, therefore, contains the most comprehensive data on all incumbent local exchange carriers, containing data on such matters as the number of telephone lines, calling volumes, and certain types of costs.

This report presents data for the eleven subject categories selected for monitoring. The first section is about the contributions to the universal service support mechanisms and industry revenues, on which those contributions are now based. The next four sections are about the various support mechanisms: low income support; high cost support; schools and libraries support; and rural health care support. The remaining six sections provide information on matters that might be affected by the support mechanisms: subscribership and penetration; rates and price indices; network usage and growth; quality of service; infrastructure; and revenues, expenses and investment. Sections 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11 contain information that had previously been

1 *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, CC Docket No. 96-45, Report and Order, FCC 97-157, para. 869 (released May 8, 1997).*

2 CC Docket No. 98-202.

included in the Monitoring Reports in CC Docket No. 87-339.³ Sections 1, 4, 5, and 9 contain entirely new material.

The following are highlights of some of the material in this report. Section 1 provides the first report on contributions to the universal service support mechanisms, and the industry revenues on which they are based. Section 2 includes data through November 1998 on the Lifeline and Link-Up America programs. Section 3 includes data from the October 1, 1997, NECA universal service fund filing, a summary of four years of revised historical data, and a table showing study area changes in the last four years. It also includes 1997 information on the NECA pools. In addition, it includes projected 1998 payments for all of the high cost support programs, based on the quarterly reports from USAC. Section 4 includes a description and status report of the schools and libraries support. Section 5 includes a description and status report of the rural health care support. Section 6 includes Census data on subscribership through March 1998. It also includes updated information on telephone penetration by income by state. Section 7 includes updated Consumer Price Index and Producer Price Index data and other updated rate information. Section 8 includes 1996 NECA network usage data and five years of revised historical data. Section 9 includes data on the quality of service from the Commission's Automated Reporting Management Information System (ARMIS) reports. Section 10 includes data through 1997 on infrastructure from the ARMIS reports. Section 11 includes information on revenues, expenses and investment for 1997 from the ARMIS reports.

This report is based on information available to us as of September 30, 1998, although in many instances we have been able to incorporate some information made available after that date. This entire report is available electronically through the **FCC-State Link** internet site, which can be reached at <http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/stats> on the World Wide Web. It is available in both page image (.pdf) format and in a compressed (.zip) format, which, when unzipped yields word processing and spreadsheet files. In addition, information received well in advance of the next Monitoring Report will be made available on an interim basis in separate staff reports or in raw data files (such as most NECA filings used in the Monitoring Report) on the internet site. In addition, the ARMIS data are available on the ARMIS internet site, which can be reached at <http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/armis/db/>. The **FCC-State Link** electronic bulletin board, which can be reached by dialing (202) 418-0241 with a computer modem, also contains these materials.

3 Section 2 of this report corresponds to section 2 of the previous Monitoring Reports. Section 3 of this report includes material from sections 3 and 7 of the previous reports. Section 6 of this report corresponds to section 1 of the previous reports. Section 7 of this report corresponds to section 5 of the previous reports. Section 8 of this report corresponds to section 4 of the previous reports. Section 10 of this report corresponds to section 8 of the previous reports. Section 11 of this report corresponds to section 6 of the previous reports.

For ease of public reference, we ask that parties submitting materials for this docket provide a duplicate copy to the Public Reference Room of the Common Carrier Bureau,⁴ where copies of all materials filed in the docket are available for public reference.

This report has been prepared by the federal staff listed below and reviewed by the state staff listed below. These staff members can be contacted for further information:

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All items filed in CC Docket No. 87-339 must be filed with the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222, Washington, D.C. 20554, and the following Commissioners and staff members (email addresses of staff members follow their mailing addresses):

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Customer Response

Publication: Monitoring Report
 December 1998

You can help us provide the best possible information to the public by completing this form and returning it to the Industry Analysis Division of the FCC's Common Carrier Bureau.

1. Please check the category that best describes you:

- press
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- potential telecommunications carrier
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- consultant, law firm, lobbyist
- other business customer
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- Other (please specify) _____

2. Please rate the report: Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor No opinion

Data accuracy	()	()	()	()	()
Data presentation	()	()	()	()	()
Timeliness of data	()	()	()	()	()
Completeness of data	()	()	()	()	()
Text clarity	()	()	()	()	()
Completeness of text	()	()	()	()	()

3. Overall, how do you rate this report?

Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	No opinion
()	()	()	()	()

4. How can this report be improved?

5. May we contact you to discuss possible improvements?

Name:
 Telephone #:

To discuss the information in this report contact: Industry Analysis Division at 202-418-0940		
Fax this response to	or	Mail this response to
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