



CENTURYLINK'S PETITION FOR COMPETITIVE CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION SHEET

Prepared by Public Counsel Unit, Attorney General's Office
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The Public Counsel Unit of the Washington Attorney General's Office represents the interests of residential and small business customers of electric, gas, water, and telecommunications companies and customers of transportation companies regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission. Public Counsel advocates on behalf of customers before the Commission and courts regarding utility rates, affordability, mergers, business practices, service quality, energy efficiency, safety, and policy matters.

CenturyLink and the Commission Staff's Settlement Agreement

On February 7, 2025, CenturyLink and Commission Staff (Staff) filed a Settlement Agreement establishing an alternative form of regulation (AFOR) in which CenturyLink's copper-based landline companies, Qwest Corporation, CenturyTel of Washington, CenturyTel of Interisland, CenturyTel of Cowiche and United Northwest would be subject to limited regulation (Collectively CenturyLink or the Company). CenturyLink argues that there are many alternative providers in its service territories, which compete with it and make full regulation unnecessary.

What does this Settlement mean?

Currently, CenturyLink is subject to an AFOR, which includes requirements such as UTC approval of discontinuance of certain residential or business services. If the UTC approves this petition the Company would be allowed to discontinue certain services without UTC approval where the discontinuance affects fewer than 500 customers and there are sufficient alternative providers to create competition.

In what ways does this Settlement improve upon CenturyLink's earlier Settlement which the Commission rejected in September 2024?

Compared to the previous Settlement, this Agreement provides increased customer support for transitioning to new technologies, uses a broader, more protective definition of a Challenging Customer Location (CCL), limits the scope of potential service discontinuances, and creates a Pilot Program with which to assess how the discontinuance process and additional benefits work for customers.

The Parties

The UTC considers the recommendations of every party, and no party's recommendation is considered binding. The following parties are participating in this proceeding:

- CenturyLink
- Commission Staff*
- Public Counsel Unit
(residential and small business customer advocate)

*In formal UTC proceedings, regulatory Staff participates like any other party, and UTC Commissioners make the decision.





Public Counsel's Position

Public Counsel is neither joining nor opposing this Settlement. While Public Counsel appreciates the additional support created in this Settlement, Public Counsel remains concerned about the lack of competition in rural areas of Washington, where there is limited cell phone service and broadband internet access. Many people rely on their landlines for home telephone service and access to emergency 911 service. Public Counsel intends to monitor how the Settlement works during the Pilot Program and to propose changes to and challenge the process if there are problems.

If you have questions, you can contact Public Counsel by emailing: utility@atg.wa.gov, or by mail to or physical office at:

Attorney General's Office, Public Counsel Unit,
800 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000, Seattle, WA 98104.

Process for Commission Decision

CenturyLink and Commission Staff filed testimony and a Settlement Agreement on February 7, 2025. Public Counsel filed testimony responding to the proposed Settlement Agreement on February 15, 2025. The UTC held an evidentiary hearing on March 12, 2025, and will issue its decision on the Petition following the Public Comment Hearing on June 5, 2025.

Submit a Comment

The UTC Commissioners appreciate hearing from members of the public about how the Company's Petition will affect them. The UTC is holding a virtual Public Comment Hearing to take comments on Thursday, June 5th at 6 p.m. You can participate remotely via the Zoom links below or by phone.

Public Comment Hearing Information:

Held on June 5, 2025, at 6 p.m.

- Zoom: <https://utc-wa-gov.zoom.us>, Meeting ID: 897 8080 5526, Passcode: 449931
- Phone: 1 253 215 8782, Meeting ID: 897 8080 5526, Passcode: 449931#

The public can additionally submit comments in the following ways:

- **Via UTC web form at:** utc.wa.gov/consumers/ (click on "Submit a Comment" link)
- **By e-mail at:** comments@utc.wa.gov
- **By mail at:** UTC, P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, WA 98504-7250
- **By phone:** 1-888-333-WUTC (9882)

Please include the following in any written comment: your name, mailing address, the name of the company (CenturyLink), and the Docket Number UT-240029. For more information, see the UTC's webpage here: <http://www.utc.wa.gov/>, or call 1-800-562-6150.