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BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of the Application of GTE Midwest)
Incorporated and GTE Arkansas Incorporated for)
Approval of an Interconnection Agreement with) Case No. TO-2000-47
Topp Comm, Inc., Pursuant to Section 252(e) of)
the Telecommunications Act of 1996.)

ORDER APPROVING INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENT

On July 14, 1999, GTE Midwest, Inc., and GTE Arkansas, Inc. (collectively GTE) filed their application with the Commission seeking approval of an interconnection agreement with Topp Comm, Inc. (Topp), under the provisions of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (the Act). By its order issued on July 26, 1999, the Commission made Topp a party to this case, directed the Staff of the Public Service Commission to investigate the circumstances and make report, and notified all interested parties that they had until August 16, 1999, to move to intervene herein or to seek a hearing on the application. No parties sought to intervene; no comments or requests for hearing were filed.

Discussion:

The Staff filed its Memorandum on August 20, 1999, recommending that the agreement be approved. Staff states that the terms and rates set out in the agreement are similar to those contained in other agreements approved by this Commission, such as that between GTE and Preferred Carrier Services, Inc., approved in Case No. TO-99-307. Staff states that the agreement does not appear to discriminate against any carriers

not parties to it and does not appear to be against the public interest, convenience or necessity.

The requirement for a hearing is met when the opportunity for hearing has been provided and no proper party has requested the opportunity to present evidence. State ex rel. Rex Deffenderfer Enterprises, Inc. v. Public Service Commission, 776 S.W.2d 494, 496 (Mo. App. 1989). Since no one has asked permission to participate or requested a hearing in this case, the Commission may grant the relief requested based on the verified application.

The Commission, under the provisions of Section 252(e) of the Act, has authority to approve an interconnection agreement negotiated between an incumbent local exchange company (LEC) and a new provider of basic local exchange service. The Commission may reject an interconnection agreement only if the agreement is discriminatory or is inconsistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity.

Staff states that the agreement appears to meet the requirements of the statute and recommends that it be approved. Staff further recommended that all modifications to the agreement be submitted to the Commission for approval. This condition has been applied in prior cases where the Commission has approved similar agreements. Staff also recommends, and the Commission agrees, that any modifications to this agreement that may arise from modifications to the interconnection agreement between GTE and Topp should be submitted according to the modification procedure discussed herein.

Findings of Fact:

The Missouri Public Service Commission, having considered all of the competent and substantial evidence upon the whole record, makes the following findings of fact.

The Commission has considered the application, the supporting documentation, and Staff's recommendation. Based upon that review, the Commission has reached the conclusion that the interconnection agreement meets the requirements of the Act in that it does not unduly discriminate against a nonparty carrier, and implementation of the agreement is not inconsistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity. The Commission finds that approval of the agreement should be conditioned upon the parties submitting any modifications or amendments to the Commission for approval pursuant to the procedure set out below.

Modification Procedure:

This Commission has a duty to review all resale and interconnection agreements, whether arrived at through negotiation or arbitration, as mandated by the Act. 47 U.S.C. Section 252. In order for the Commission's role of review and approval to be effective, the Commission must also review and approve modifications to these agreements. The Commission has a further duty to make a copy of every resale and interconnection agreement available for public inspection. 47 U.S.C. Section 252(h). This duty is in keeping with the Commission's practice under its own rules of requiring telecommunications companies to keep their rate schedules on file with the Commission. 4 CSR 240-30.010.

The parties to each resale or interconnection agreement must maintain a complete and current copy of the agreement, together with all modifications, in the Commission's offices. Any proposed modification must be submitted for Commission approval, whether the modification arises through negotiation, arbitration, or by means of alternative dispute resolution procedures.

The parties shall provide the Telecommunications Staff with a copy of the resale or interconnection agreement with the pages numbered consecutively in the lower right-hand corner. Modifications to an agreement must be submitted to the Staff for review. When approved the modified pages will be substituted in the agreement, which should contain the number of the page being replaced in the lower right-hand corner. Staff will date-stamp the pages when they are inserted into the Agreement. The official record of the original agreement and all the modifications made will be maintained by the Telecommunications Staff in the Commission's tariff room.

The Commission does not intend to conduct a full proceeding each time the parties agree to a modification. Where a proposed modification is identical to a provision that has been approved by the Commission in another agreement, the modification will be approved once Staff has verified that the provision is an approved provision, and prepared a recommendation advising approval. Where a proposed modification is not contained in another approved agreement, Staff will review the modification and its effects and prepare a recommendation advising the Commission whether the modification should be approved. The Commission

may approve the modification based on the Staff recommendation. If the Commission chooses not to approve the modification, the Commission will establish a case, give notice to interested parties and permit responses. The Commission may conduct a hearing if it is deemed necessary.

Conclusions of Law:

The Missouri Public Service Commission has arrived at the following conclusions of law.

The Commission, under the provisions of Section 252(e)(1) of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, 47 U.S.C. Section 252(e)(1), is required to review negotiated resale agreements. It may only reject a negotiated agreement upon a finding that its implementation would be discriminatory to a nonparty or inconsistent with the public interest, convenience and necessity under Section 252(e)(2)(A). Based upon its review of the interconnection agreement between GTE and Topp and its findings of fact, the Commission concludes that the agreement is neither discriminatory nor inconsistent with the public interest and should be approved.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. That the interconnection agreement between GTE Midwest, Inc., GTE Arkansas, Inc., and Topp Comm, Inc., filed on July 14, 1999, is approved.

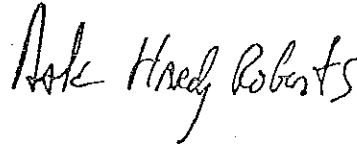
2. That the parties shall file an executed copy of this agreement with the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission, with the pages numbered seriatim in the lower right-hand corner, on or before

September 20, 1999. The parties shall file on the same date a notice in the official case file advising the Commission that the agreement has been submitted to Staff as required.

3. That any changes or modifications to this agreement shall be filed with the Commission for approval pursuant to the procedure outlined in this order.

4. That this order shall become effective on September 3, 1999.

BY THE COMMISSION



Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge

(S E A L)

Kevin A. Thompson, Deputy Chief
Regulatory Law Judge, by delegation
of authority pursuant to 4 CSR
240-2.120(1) (November 30, 1995)
and Section 386.240, RSMo 1994.

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 24th day of August, 1999.

RECEIVED

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COMMISSION COUNSEL
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION