

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**  
**OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

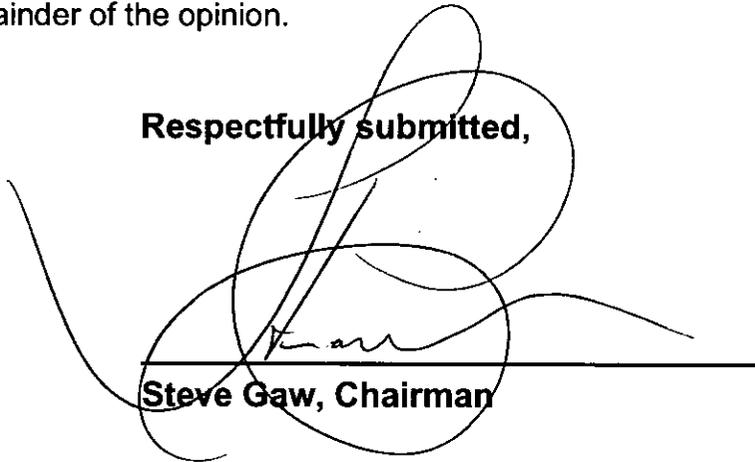
In the Matter of the Investigation of the State of                    )  
Competition in the Exchanges of Sprint Missouri, Inc.    )    **Case No. IO-2003-0281**

**CONCURRING OPINION OF CHAIRMAN STEVE GAW**

Although I generally concur in today's decision, I disagree with several findings about whether a single competitor in a rural exchange can provide healthy, sustainable, competition. The evidence presented to the Commission indicates that a competing company has taken a significant share of the local service market in three of Sprint's exchanges. However, I question whether the presence of that competition will be an effective restraint on Sprint's pricing decisions. I fear that rather than acting to meet competition, Sprint could choose to effectively abandon a small exchange by raising its prices. This is particularly a concern in a very small exchange, such as Norborne. If that were to happen, a small, rural exchange could find itself served essentially only by a minimally regulated competitive local exchange carrier that is not subject to effective price competition. Thus, I would not designate that the rural markets were competitive without significant assurance that competition were likely to continue. Additional competitors would improve that outlook. Any of the other decision points that rely on a finding about competitive designation I would also alter consistent with the designation.

I agree with the remainder of the opinion.

**Respectfully submitted,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Gaw", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is highly stylized and loops back over itself. The text "Steve Gaw, Chairman" is printed below the line, partially obscured by the signature's loops.

**Steve Gaw, Chairman**

(SEAL)

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,  
on this 8th day of December, 2003.