

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

In the Matter of Application of Birch Telecom of)
Missouri, Inc. d/b/a NOW Communications as an)
Eligible Telecommunications Carrier in the)
State of Missouri for the Limited Purpose of)
Offering Lifeline Service to Qualified Households)

File No. TA-2013-0314

STAFF REPLY

COMES NOW the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission and for its request, states as follows:

1. On November 29, 2012, Birch Telecom of Missouri, Inc. d/b/a NOW Communications (“Applicant”) requested designation by the Missouri Public Service Commission (“Commission”) as an eligible telecommunications carrier for the purpose of providing prepaid wireless services in Missouri supported by the federal Universal Service Fund’s Lifeline program.

2. The Staff estimates that it will be another six to nine months until it is able to file its recommendation. At the present time, it is common for there to be three rounds of Data Requests from the Staff (the first set is standard; the subsequent rounds arise from the prior company responses). This review, as well as the other Staff and FCC review, necessitate such a lengthy pendency of the application.

3. Should the Staff conclude its investigation prior to that time, it will file its recommendation without delay.

WHEREFORE, the Staff will file either a Staff Recommendation or Status Report on or before August 10, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, hand-delivered, transmitted by facsimile or electronically mailed to all counsel of record this 12th day of December, 2012.

