

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

At a session of the Public Service
Commission held at its office in
Jefferson City on the 12th day of
December, 2018.

Application of Mark Twain Communications)
Company for Expansion of its Designation as an)
Eligible Telecommunications Carrier for Purposes)
Of Receiving CAF Phase II Support)

File No. CA-2019-0117

**ORDER GRANTING APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION
AS AN ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER**

Issue Date: December 12, 2018

Effective Date: January 11, 2019

On October 30, 2018, Mark Twain Communications Company (“Mark Twain”) filed its application for expansion of its designation as a wireless Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (“ETC”) for Purposes of Receiving Connect America Fund Phase II Support. Mark Twain wishes to expand its ETC designation as a high-cost and low-income ETC to include certain census blocks for high cost support services and for Lifeline and disabled services.

Mark Twain filed this application due to a recent award in a reverse auction for the Connect America Fund II (“CAF II”) held by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”). The FCC notified Mark Twain on August 28, 2018 that it was a winning bidder. To obtain the funding it was awarded, Mark Twain must receive FCC expansion of its ETC status no later than February 28, 2019. Thus, Mark Twain also requested expedited treatment to meet that deadline.

The CAF II program is part of the FCC’s reform and modernization of its universal service fund support programs designed to accelerate the expansion of broadband services

to rural areas, and to any areas which presently lack the infrastructure capable to support at least 10/1 Mbps of fixed broadband services. The FCC held an auction to allocate funds to various companies which could further the goals of the CAF II program. The FCC requires each winning company to obtain ETC designation from its respective public utilities commission prior to receiving the allocated funds.

The Commission issued notice and set a deadline for intervention. No person or entity sought intervention in this matter, and no party has requested a hearing. On November 28, 2018, the Commission's Staff filed a *Staff Recommendation*, which recommends that the Commission grant the application.

The application is within the Commission's jurisdiction to decide.¹ Since no law requires a hearing, this is a non-contested case.² Non-contested cases do not require formal proceedings or hearings before the Commission, and as such, there is no evidentiary record.³ Consequently, the Commission bases its decision on the verified filings.

The federal Universal Service Fund was established in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 ("Act"). The stated purpose of the fund is to ensure that telephone customers in rural and high cost areas, as well as low-income customers, have access to quality telecommunications services at reasonable and affordable rates.⁴ To meet that goal, the Universal Service Fund redistributes money paid into the fund by telecommunications customers to telecommunications service providers who serve low-income customers or rural and high cost areas.

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(2); Commission Rule 4 CSR 240-31.130(1).

² Section 536.010(4), RSMo, defines a "contested case" as "a proceeding before an agency in which legal rights, duties or privileges of specific parties are required by law to be determined after hearing."

³ *Sapp v. City of St. Louis*, 320 S.W.3d 159, 163 (Mo. App. 2010).

⁴ 47 U.S.C. 254(b).

Before a telecommunications service provider is eligible to receive funding from the Universal Service Fund, it must be designated as an Eligible Telecommunications Company (“ETC”). Section 214(e)(6) of the Act provides, in pertinent part:

In the case of a common carrier providing telephone exchange service and exchange access that is not subject to the jurisdiction of a State commission, the Commission shall upon request designate such a common carrier that meets the requirements of paragraph (1) as an eligible telecommunications carrier for a service area designated by the Commission consistent with applicable Federal and State law.

The Commission finds the assertions in the application and the *Staff Recommendation* to be true. The Commission must expand Mark Twain’s ETC designation if it satisfies all federal and state requirements.⁵ Based upon its independent and impartial review of the verified application and staff recommendation, the Commission finds that Mark Twain has met all federal and state requirements and that it is in the public interest to grant the ETC application. Therefore, the Commission will expand Mark Twain’s ETC designation for the purpose of receiving federal high-cost and low-income support for the service area identified in its application.⁶

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. The Motion for Expedited Treatment is granted.
2. Mark Twain Communications Company is designated as an eligible telecommunications carrier to receive federal high-cost and low-income support for the service area identified in Exhibit 2 of its initial application.

⁵ 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(1),(2) and (6).

⁶ The service areas are within the counties of Clark, Knox, Lewis and Monroe.

3. This order shall become effective on January 11, 2019.
4. This case shall be closed on January 12, 2019.



BY THE COMMISSION

Morris L. Woodruff

Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

Silvey, Chm., Kenney, Hall, Rupp, and
Coleman, CC., concur.

Pridgin, Deputy Chief Regulatory Law Judge

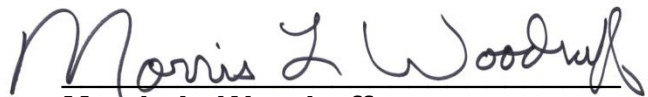
STATE OF MISSOURI

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

I have compared the preceding copy with the original on file in this office and I do hereby certify the same to be a true copy therefrom and the whole thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Public Service Commission, at Jefferson City, Missouri, this 12th day of December 2018.




Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

December 12, 2018

File/Case No. CA-2019-0117

**Missouri Public Service
Commission**

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Enclosed find a certified copy of an Order or Notice issued in the above-referenced matter(s).

Sincerely,



**Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary**

Recipients listed above with a valid e-mail address will receive electronic service. Recipients without a valid e-mail address will receive paper service.