

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

In the Matter of Northwest Missouri)	
Cellular Limited Partnership's)	<u>File No. RO-2025-0144</u>
Relinquishment of ETC Designation)	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

COMES NOW the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission (Staff) and for its *Recommendation* in this matter states as follows:

1. On October 31, 2024, Northwest Missouri Cellular Limited Partnership (NWMC) filed a *Notice* with the Missouri Public Service Commission (Commission) seeking to relinquish its designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) in the state of Missouri, effective January 31, 2025.

2. Commission rule 20 CSR 240-31.015(4) governs the relinquishment of ETC status and requires that the carrier must provide a letter signed by an authorized company official or representative at least sixty (60) days prior to relinquishing ETC status demonstrating compliance with section 47 U.S.C. 214(e)(4).

3. As explained in Staff's Memorandum, attached hereto as Appendix A, Staff has reviewed NWMC's *Notice* and states that NWMC has met the requirements of 20 CSR 240-31.015(4) and is in compliance with 47 U.S.C. 214(e)(4), and thus, recommends the Commission approve the relinquishment of NWMC's ETC designation in Missouri, effective January 31, 2025.

WHEREFORE, Staff recommends that the Commission issue an order that grants the relinquishment of Northwest Missouri Cellular Limited Partnership's ETC designation in Missouri, effective January 31, 2025; and grant such other and further relief as is just in the circumstances.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Mark Johnson

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Missouri Public Service Commission

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing was served by electronic mail, or First Class United States Postal Mail, postage prepaid, on this 2nd day of December, 2024, to all counsel of record.

/s/ Mark Johnson

MEMORANDUM

To: Missouri Public Service Commission Official Case File
Case No. RO-2025-0144

From: Kari Salsman, Senior Research/Data Analyst
John VanEschen, Regulatory Compliance Manager
Telecommunications Department

Subject: Staff's Recommendation for Northwest Missouri Cellular Limited Partnership's Notice of Relinquishment of Its Eligible Telecommunication Carrier Designation.

Date: December 2, 2024

On October 31, 2024, Northwest Missouri Cellular Limited Partnership (NWMC) filed a request for the Missouri Public Service Commission (Commission) to relinquish its Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) designation in the State of Missouri, effective January 31, 2025. If approved, the company will no longer receive federal universal service funding from the high-cost program and the Lifeline program.

The requirements for relinquishment of ETC status are contained in Commission rule 20 CSR-4240-31.015(4). This rule indicates a company can relinquish its ETC designation by providing a letter signed by an authorized company official or representative at least sixty (60) days prior to relinquishing ETC status demonstrating compliance with 47 U.S.C. section 214(e)(4). These federal requirements are codified in FCC rule 47 CFR 54.205 and essentially are intended to ensure the affected area will continue to be served by at least one ETC.

NWMC's ETC designation is limited to an area located in northwest Missouri.¹ According to the company's filing, other ETCs will continue to serve the area. NWMC has entered into a transaction with and recommends its customers switch to Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless. Customers are being referred to Verizon Wireless, however they are free to obtain service from any of the numerous carriers that offer service in the area, and in general may keep their existing telephone number and retain their current mobile device. In addition, the company provided a list of landline ETCs offering Lifeline service in the area.² NWMC began informing its Lifeline customers through letters beginning in September and will send reminder emails and texts through December 31, 2024. The company will then individually contact any remaining customers who have not changed service providers and urge them to do so by January 31, 2025, to avoid losing service after that date.

Staff recommends the Commission approve the relinquishment of Northwest Missouri Cellular Limited Partnership's ETC designation in Missouri, effective January 31, 2025.

¹ Appendix A of the company's ETC application in Case No. TO-2005-0466.

² Appendix A of the application.