MONITORING REPORT

CC DOCKET NO. 87-339

MAY 1997

Prepared by Federal and State Staff for the

Federal-State Joint Board in

CC Docket No. 80-286

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Introduction and Summary

This is the nineteenth report of a series of reports intended to help telecommunications policy makers and the general public monitor the impact of decisions adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) that initially stemmed from the Federal-State Joint Board in CC Docket No. 80-286 (Separations Joint Board) in 1987. These decisions included increased subscriber line charges, expanded federal lifeline assistance programs, retargeted high cost assistance, and a modified common line pooling system. To enhance our monitoring ability, a new open docket\(^1\) was created, which allows data, materials, comments, and studies to be submitted at any time. In 1992, the Commission extended the monitoring program an additional five years, with annual reports to be released in May of each year from 1993 through 1997.\(^2\)

The Telecommunications Act of 1996, signed into law on February 8, 1996, is bringing many changes in the telecommunications industry and the way it is regulated. One of the first changes was the creation of a new Federal-State Joint Board in CC Docket No. 96-45 (Universal Service Joint Board) to make recommendations relating to universal service issues. Although this Monitoring Report was designed for the Separations Joint Board, the monitoring needs of the two Joint Boards overlap. Consequently, on May 7, 1997, the Commission delegated to the Common Carrier Bureau, in consultation with the staffs of both Joint Boards, the creation of a new monitoring program, to supersede the present one.\(^3\) Accordingly, this is the final Monitoring Report in the present program. Materials from the reports of the administrator of the new universal service support mechanisms will be incorporated into the new Monitoring Reports.

This report has proven to be valuable in more ways than merely reporting the effects of regulatory changes. Most of the nation's smaller local exchange carriers are regulated primarily by the states rather than the Commission. The National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA), at the direction of the Commission, collects information from each of these smaller carriers in order to administer the access charge pools, the Universal Service Fund, and the lifeline programs. Because smaller carriers generally are exempt from most Commission reporting requirements, the Monitoring Report contains the most comprehensive data on these carriers. It provides a complete census of all

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incumbent local exchange carriers, containing data on such matters as the number of telephone lines, calling volumes, and certain types of costs.

This report presents data for the eight subject categories selected for monitoring, which are: (1) subscribership and penetration levels; (2) lifeline assistance plans; (3) high cost assistance; (4) network usage and growth; (5) rates; (6) revenues, expenses and investment; (7) pooling; and (8) infrastructure and new services.

Since our May 1996 Monitoring Report, new information in each of the eight categories has become available and is incorporated in this report. The following are highlights of some of the new material. Section 1 includes Census data on subscribership for 1996 and March 1997. It also includes updated information on telephone penetration by income by state, and compares changes in penetration in states with and without Lifeline programs. Section 2 includes 1996 NECA data on the Lifeline and Link-Up America programs. It also provides data that have not been included since 1992 for individual study areas. Section 3 includes new data from the October 1, 1996, NECA universal service fund filing, a summary of four years of revised historical data, and a table showing study area changes in the last four years. It also includes, for the first time, a table showing the holding company affiliation of each study area. Section 4 includes 1995 NECA network usage data, 1996 NECA presubscribed line data, and five years of revised historical data. It includes, for the first time, interstate access minutes data for individual average schedule companies. Section 5 includes Consumer Price Index and Producer Price Index data through April 1997 and other updated rate information. Section 6 includes information on revenues, expenses and investment for 1996 from the Commission's Automated Reporting Management Information System (ARMIS) reports. Section 7 includes 1996 information on the NECA pools. Section 8 includes 1995 data on infrastructure from the ARMIS reports.

The Joint Board recommended that as much of the report as possible be made available electronically. This has been implemented by having the text and the tables in the report available through the FCC-State Link internet site, which can be reached via a link from the Common Carrier Bureau home page (http://www.fcc.gov/ccb/) on the World Wide Web. The Joint Board further recommended that information received well in advance of the next Monitoring Report be made available on an interim basis in separate staff reports. This is also done whenever possible, and those reports are also available in the internet site, as are most NECA filings used in the Monitoring Report. All of these materials, plus ARMIS data, are available on the FCC-State Link electronic bulletin board, which can be reached by dialing (202) 418-0241 with a computer modem.

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For ease of public reference, we ask that parties submitting materials for this docket provide a duplicate copy to the Public Reference Room of the Common Carrier Bureau, 5 where copies of all materials filed in the docket are available for public reference.

The following federal and state staff members have contributed to this report and can be contacted for further information:

General Information: Alexander Belinfante (Federal) (202) 418-0944
Peyton Wynns (Federal) (202) 418-0942
Deborah Dupont (Federal) (202) 418-0873
Debra Kriete (Pennsylvania) (717) 787-8763

Subscribership and Penetration: Alexander Belinfante (Federal) (202) 418-0944
Sam Loudenslager (Arkansas) (501) 682-5824

Lifeline Assistance Plans: Laurence Povich (Federal) (202) 418-0953
Joe Bender (Federal) (202) 418-2489
Jeff Richter (Wisconsin) (608) 267-9624

High Cost Assistance: Alexander Belinfante (Federal) (202) 418-0944
Joel Shifman (Maine) (207) 287-1381
Sam Loudenslager (Arkansas) (501) 682-5824

Network Usage and Growth: Adrianne Brent (Federal) (202) 418-0951
Paul Pederson (Missouri) (573) 751-7427
Joel Shifman (Maine) (207) 287-1381
Cynthia Van Landuyt (Oregon) (503) 378-6638

Rates: Tracy Waldon (Federal) (202) 418-0957
Sandy Ibaugh (Indiana) (317) 232-2523

Revenues, Expenses and Investment: Hank Richmond (Federal) (202) 418-0946
Fred Sistarenik (New York) (518) 486-2815

Pooling: Alexander Belinfante (Federal) (202) 418-0944
Fred Sistarenik (New York) (518) 486-2815
Debra Kriete (Pennsylvania) (717) 787-8763

Infrastructure and New Services: Jonathan Kraushaar (Federal) (202) 418-0947
Jonathon Lakritz (California) (415) 703-2117

---

5 2000 M Street NW, Room 575, FCC, Washington, DC 20554.
SERVICE LIST

All items filed in CC Docket No. 87-339 must be filed with the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222, Washington, D.C. 20554, and the following Commissioners and staff members (email addresses of staff members follow their mailing addresses):

DOCKET NO. 80-286 JOINT BOARD MEMBERS

Chairman Reed E. Hundt
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW, Room 814
Washington, DC  20554

Commissioner Susan Ness
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW, Room 832
Washington, DC  20554

Commissioner Rachelle B. Chong
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M. St., NW, Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

Chairman Thomas L. Welch
Maine Public Utilities Commission
242 State St., State House Station 18
Augusta, ME 04333

Chairman Cheryl L. Parrino
Wisconsin Public Service Commission
610 North Whitney Way
P. O. Box 7854
Madison, WI 53707-7854

Commissioner David W. Rolka
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
North Office Building, Room 110
Commonwealth & North Sts.
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

Commissioner Joan H. Smith
Oregon Public Utility Commission
550 Capitol Street
Salem, OR 97310

DOCKET NO. 80-286 FEDERAL-STATE JOINT BOARD STAFF

Debra Kriete
Chief, Federal-State Joint Board Staff
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Room 110, North Office Building
Commonwealth & North Sts.
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265
dkriete@epix.net

James Bradford Ramsay
Chief of Staff
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
1102 ICC Building
Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20044-0684
ramsay@erols.com
Fred Sistarenik  
New York Public Service Commission  
3 Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12223  
fys@dps.state.ny.us  

Cynthia Van Landuyt  
Oregon Public Utility Commission  
550 Capitol Street  
Salem, OR 97310  
cynthia.vanlanduyt@state.or.us  

Joel B. Shifman  
Maine Public Utilities Commission  
State House, Station 18  
Augusta, ME 04333  
joel.shifman@state.me.us  

Sandy Ibaugh  
Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission  
302 W. Washington, Suite E-306  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
sibaugh@gwnet.isd.state.in.us  

Jeff Richter  
Wisconsin Public Service Commission  
610 North Whitney Way  
P.O. Box 7854  
Madison, WI 53707-7854  
richtj@mail.state.wi.us  

Paul Pederson  
Missouri Public Service Commission  
Harry S Truman Bldg., Room 530  
301 High Street  
P.O. Box 360  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
ppederso@mail.state.mo.us  

Sam Loudenslager  
Arkansas Public Service Commission  
1000 Center Street  
P.O. Box C-400  
Little Rock, AR 72203-0400  
rfscl@psc.state.ar.us  

Jonathon Lakritz  
California Public Utilities Commission  
California State Building  
505 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
jol@cpuc.ca.gov  

Deborah Dupont, Assistant Chief  
Accounting and Audits Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, MailStop 1600E  
Federal Communications Commission  
2000 L Street NW, Suite 812  
Washington, DC 20554  
ddupont@fcc.gov  

Chuck Needy, Assistant Chief  
Accounting and Audits Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600E  
Federal Communications Commission  
2000 L Street NW, Suite 812  
Washington, DC 20554  
cneedy@fcc.gov  

Mindy Ginsburg, Deputy Chief  
Accounting and Audits Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, MailStop 1600E  
Federal Communications Commission  
2000 L Street NW, Suite 812  
Washington, DC 20554  
mginsbur@fcc.gov  

Debbie Byrd  
Legal Branch  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600E2  
Federal Communications Commission  
2000 L Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20554  
dbyrd@fcc.gov  

Connie Chapman  
Mark Ehrlich
OTHER FEDERAL STAFF

Alexander Belinfante  
Industry Analysis Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600F  
Federal Communications Commission  
2033 M Street NW, Room 500  
Washington, DC 20554  
abelinfa@fcc.gov

Peyton L. Wynns  
Chief, Industry Analysis Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600F  
Federal Communications Commission  
2033 M Street NW, Room 500  
Washington, DC 20554  
pwynns@fcc.gov

Jonathan Kraushaar  
Industry Analysis Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600F  
Federal Communications Commission  
2033 M Street NW, Room 500  
Washington, DC 20554  
jkrausha@fcc.gov

Tracy Waldon  
Industry Analysis Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600F  
Federal Communications Commission  
2033 M Street NW, Room 500  
Washington, DC 20554  
twaldon@fcc.gov

Joe Bender  
Industry Analysis Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600F  
Federal Communications Commission  
2033 M Street NW, Room 500  
Washington, DC 20554  
jbender@fcc.gov

Laurence Povich  
Industry Analysis Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600F  
Federal Communications Commission  
2033 M Street NW, Room 500  
Washington, DC 20554  
lpovich@fcc.gov

Adrianne Brent  
Industry Analysis Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600F  
Federal Communications Commission  
2033 M Street NW, Room 500  
Washington, DC 20554  
abrent@fcc.gov

Hank Richmond  
Industry Analysis Division  
Common Carrier Bureau, Mail Stop 1600F  
Federal Communications Commission  
2033 M Street NW, Room 500  
Washington, DC 20554  
hrichmon@fcc.gov
Customer Response
Publication: Monitoring Report, May 1997

You can help us provide the best possible information to the public by completing this form and returning it to the Industry Analysis Division of the FCC's Common Carrier Bureau.

1. Please check the category that best describes you:
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2. Please rate the report: Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor No opinion

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   Data presentation          (_)      (_)     (_)        (_)       (_)
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   Completeness of data       (_)      (_)     (_)        (_)       (_)
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3. Overall, how do you rate this report?

   Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor No opinion

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4. How can this report be improved?

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
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