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BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In Re: Determination of amount of) SPECIAL PROJECT
support necessary to provide residential) NO. 980000C-SP
basic local telecommunications service)
to low-income customers who qualify for)
Lifeline service.)

PROCEEDINGS: Workshop
DATE: Wednesday, September 30, 1998
TIME: Commenced at 9:30 a.m.
Concluded at 10:15 a.m.
PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center
Room 148
4075 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, Florida
REPORTED BY: NANCY S. METZKE, RPR, CCR
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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. McNULTY: Okay. I guess we can get started.
3 This is a workshop for Undocketed Special Project
4 980000C-SP. I would like to call the workshop to order.
5 My name is Bill McNulty. I'm with research and regulatory
6 review staff, Division of Research and Regulatory Review
7 with the Florida Public Service Commission. And at this
8 time I think it would be appropriate to have staff
9 introduce themselves, and then we'll ask the various
10 interested persons to do the same.

11 MR. COX: Will Cox, with the legal division.

12 MS. WATTS: Clintina Watts, legal division.

13 MS. MARSH: Anne Marsh, division of
14 communications.

15 MR. YU: Yiwen Yu, research division.

16 MS. DANIEL: Patti Daniel, research. You guys
17 want to introduce yourselves?

18 MR. POAG: Ben Poag with Sprint.

19 MR. FONS: John Fons with the Ausley law firm
20 representing Sprint-Florida, Inc.

21 MR. McNULTY: If you could please come to a
22 microphone.

23 MR. POAG: Ben Poag with Sprint.

24 MR. FONS: John Fons with the Ausley law firm,
25 representing Sprint-Florida, Inc.

1 MS. WHITE: Nancy White and Nancy Sims, Mary Rose
2 Sirianni for BellSouth.

3 MR. SCOBIE: Mike Scobie and Kirk McNew with
4 GTE.

5 MR. ERWIN: Dave Erwin representing ITS
6 Telecommunications Systems.

7 MR. PASCHALL: Ed Paschall, AARP.

8 MR. BECK: Charlie Beck and Earl Poucher, Office
9 of the Public Counsel.

10 MR. McNULTY: Okay. The title of this docket is:
11 "The determination of the amount of support necessary to
12 provide residential basic local telecommunications service
13 to low-income customers in Florida." This workshop is not
14 to be confused with another scheduled Lifeline-related
15 workshop scheduled for October 20th. Anne Marsh has some
16 information on this.

17 MS. MARSH: On October 20th we'll be having
18 another workshop on Lifeline, and as Bill indicated, it's
19 not part of this project. The chairman has asked me to
20 investigate certain issues that have been raised. Part of
21 it has been in customer testimony in Study 2, but it has
22 come up in other arenas as well. One of the primary issues
23 we'll be discussing will be automatic enrollment in
24 Lifeline. I would really like to hear from both companies
25 and the agencies involved as to the pros and cons of

1 automatic enrollment and suggestions for how to go about it
2 if we did adopt something like that, or assuming whoever
3 could adopt a program like that would do so.

4 As an alternative to automatic enrollment, we
5 would also like to explore the possibility of having a
6 standardized form for Lifeline. Some of the agencies have
7 expressed a desire to have a form that they could help
8 their clients fill out. An additional issue is whether or
9 not Lifeline subscribers should be permitted to subscribe
10 to ancillary services at their own expense, which is what
11 they do now. If there is a restriction placed on the
12 services so that they could not sign up for ancillary
13 services, a determination would need to be made as to what
14 they would be allowed to purchase.

15 We certainly wouldn't be deciding all of that at
16 this workshop. It's just to get some input and some
17 thought. The outcome of the workshop will be that I'll be
18 making a presentation to the commissioners at internal
19 affairs, basically a briefing. What will happen after that
20 on the subject I don't know, but that is where will be
21 going. So that will be October 20th, and I think I have it
22 scheduled for the small hearing room at 9:30. There will
23 be a dial-in number, and that is in the notice, and the
24 notice has gone out.

25 MS. WHITE: Excuse me. Nancy White for BellSouth

1 Telecommunications. Can I ask a couple of questions on
2 that?

3 MS. MARSH: Sure.

4 MS. WHITE: Just clarification.

5 MS. MARSH: Okay. Sure.

6 MS. WHITE: By automatic enrollment, do you mean
7 that like when they sign up for one of the social services
8 they would be automatically enrolled?

9 MS. MARSH: Yes.

10 MS. WHITE: Is that what you mean?

11 MS. MARSH: Yes.

12 MS. WHITE: And then the issues that you are
13 going to take on discussion, you just want -- if people
14 have comments, to be prepared to make comments on those
15 types of issues at the October 20th workshop?

16 MS. MARSH: Yes, and anything related to those
17 topics that you can think of, you know, we can sit down and
18 discuss it so that I can brief the commissioners on the
19 topic.

20 MR. BECK: Anne, Charlie Beck with the Public
21 Counsel's office. Commissioner Garcia has mentioned
22 numerous times at the public hearings about the issue of
23 Lifeline customers taking ancillary services. What
24 evidence is available about the extent to which Lifeline
25 customers do that?

1 MS. MARSH: I have gotten a data request
2 recently. Let me see, looks to be about 60%.

3 MR. BECK: Okay. You have that, and it's
4 breaking down which services are taken?

5 MS. MARSH: No, I don't. I just asked for a
6 total.

7 MR. BECK: Just some ancillary service.

8 MS. MARSH: I have asked them just for whatever
9 ancillary services customers take. I didn't ask for it to
10 be broken down.

11 MR. BECK: Okay. So what you have is simply
12 either yes or no?

13 MS. MARSH: Yeah, basically.

14 MR. BECK: Okay.

15 MS. MARSH: There are a few -- I think maybe one
16 company responded to just a couple of services as an
17 example, but basically I just have a percentage number and
18 that's all.

19 MR. BECK: Thank you.

20 MR. McNULTY: Okay. The notice on today's
21 workshop went out on September 14th to all interested
22 persons and to state and federal agencies that are
23 qualifying agencies for Lifeline or qualifying -- that
24 implement or administer qualifying programs for Lifeline
25 service.

1 The purpose of the workshop, as stated in the
2 notice, is to allow interested persons to respond to the
3 method staff is using to determine the number of Lifeline
4 qualified low-income customers in Florida. Everyone should
5 have an agenda and a copy of the staff's draft report on
6 this subject. There is one located -- there are additional
7 copies located at the front table here.

8 The first thing we would like to do before
9 getting into our methodology is to go through some of the
10 corrections, review some of the corrections to staff's
11 draft report; and these corrections are not grammatical in
12 nature, they are substantive. We will handle grammatical
13 another time with the final review. We didn't feel as
14 though that was important to do at this juncture.

15 So if you do have a copy, if you wouldn't mind
16 following along on page 8, at the -- towards the bottom of
17 the page at the end of the, I guess what we call the second
18 paragraph, the statement: "However, staff did make a
19 best-guess assumption." That sentence needs to be
20 eliminated, deleted and replaced with the paragraph on the
21 following page, page 9. So that is correction one to be
22 made.

23 The second correction is on page 10 in the middle
24 of the page. The sentence that starts with, "For example,
25 DCF maintains Medicaid program participation data," the

1 term "DCF" should be deleted and replaced with A-H-C-A, for
2 Agency for Health Care Administration.

3 The third correction is on page 13 in table two
4 on the bottom right cell of that table, we have the number
5 34 thousand 282,676. That number needs to be replaced with
6 thirty -- excuse me, I meant to say 34 million 282,676.
7 That number is to be replaced with 34,283,676.

8 That same error appears at the bottom of the page
9 in the text, the second to the last line. That would --
10 And the fourth correction.

11 Correction 5 appears on page 15 in table 3, the
12 header for the second to the last column is "Projected
13 Based section 8." It should be "Project Base Section 8,"
14 so please drop the e-d on that word.

15 The sixth correction is also on page 15 but in
16 the bottom of the page under the LIHEAP section. The
17 Florida LIHEAP administrator's name is Robert Lakin, not
18 Lane, so that the name is spelled L-a-k-i-n.

19 The seventh correction is on page 16 in the
20 middle of the page under the header "Estimation of future
21 number of Lifeline eligible customers and Lifeline
22 support," three lines below that where it says, "Agency for
23 Health Care Administration --" or it says AHCA, and DFC.
24 That should be DCF, not DFC.

25 The eighth correction is a few lines down, the

1 reference to Agency for Health Care Administration or AHCA
2 is incorrect. Where it says, "According to AHCA," it
3 should have said, "Office of economic and demographic
4 research," in parens, EDR.

5 The ninth correction is at the top of page 17,
6 Robert Lakin's name is, again, misspelled, L-a-k-i-n.

7 And another correction, or tenth correction is
8 the bottom of page 17, the sentence that starts with, "As
9 depicted in table 4," the "AHCA" appearing in that sentence
10 should be replaced with "EDR."

11 I believe I have one more correction to tell you
12 about, and that is on -- take you back to page 5. At the
13 bottom of the page it cites an order number,
14 PSC-98-0328-FPF-TP, to include Temporary Assistance to
15 Needy Families. "Temporary Assistance to Needy Families"
16 is to be deleted and replaced with "Public housing in
17 Section 8 and LIHEAP." And LIHEAP is spelled L-I-H-E-A-P.

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Would you give that again to
19 us?

20 MR. McNULTY: Yes, the final sentence --

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Just give us (inaudible).

22 MR. McNULTY: The new language is "Public Housing
23 and Section 8 and LIHEAP."

24 MR. POAG: Eliminate your footnote?

25 MR. McNULTY: Excuse me?

1 MR. POAG: It eliminates your footnote?

2 MR. McNULTY: Yes, it does.

3 MR. ERWIN: Would you repeat the first correction
4 that you gave?

5 MR. McNULTY: Yes. The first correction is on
6 page 8. The last sentence of the first complete paragraph
7 starts with the word "however." That sentence is to be
8 deleted and replaced with the paragraph on page 9.

9 Are there any questions on the corrections that
10 have been discussed this morning?

11 (NO RESPONSE)

12 MR. POAG: Deleting that footnote three is going
13 to change your footnotes all the way through?

14 MR. McNULTY: Yes, it will.

15 MR. POAG: Yeah, and then I was just noticing
16 back on page 15, is that you've got a 45 by the footnote at
17 the bottom, and it's not clear to me how you jumped to 45
18 in your footnote references here.

19 MR. McNULTY: That will be corrected. That's one
20 of those grammatical issues.

21 MR. POAG: You followed then on with 46 on the
22 subsequent page.

23 MR. McNULTY: Right.

24 MR. POAG: So you just need to fix those numbers.

25 MR. McNULTY: Very good. Thank you for bringing

1 that to our attention.

2 Okay. What we would like to do now is to present
3 an overview of staff's methodology and findings, and
4 following this we will solicit comments and questions, and
5 then we will proceed to Number III on today's agenda.

6 The first point I would like to make about the
7 Lifeline service program is that it's a federal program and
8 that households qualify for receiving Lifeline assistance
9 by participating in certain federal assistance programs,
10 and those federal assistance programs include Medicaid,
11 Food Stamps, SSI, or Supplemental Security Income, Public
12 Housing Assistance and Section 8 programs and LIHEAP.

13 In Florida eligibility guidelines have been
14 modified somewhat this year. We have changed what was
15 previously Aid to Families with Dependent Children to be
16 modified now to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families,
17 and we made other changes to include Public Housing and
18 Section 8 and LIHEAP.

19 The agencies that are basically in a position to
20 help us determine the number of customers eligible to
21 receive Lifeline assistance because they administer the
22 programs include the Florida Department of Children and
23 Families which administers Medicaid, Food Stamps and
24 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, or TANF. The
25 second such agency is the Agency for Health Care

1 Administration which administers SSI. The third agency is
2 the Federal Department of Housing and Urban development,
3 which it administers Public Housing Assistance and Section
4 8. And finally, the fourth agency is the Department of
5 Community Affairs which administers Low-Income Home Energy
6 Assistance Program, or LIHEAP.

7 In developing a methodology for determining the
8 number of Lifeline qualifying customers in Florida, staff
9 knew that the primary obstacle would be more complicated
10 than simply asking the agencies to provide us the number of
11 households participating in each of the programs and then
12 summing up these numbers. We anticipated that there would
13 be a large proportion of these households which would be
14 participating in more than one program thus simply summing
15 the participants of each program would lead to a serious
16 case of double counting of households; however, during the
17 course of developing our methodology, several other issues
18 became evident. The main issues we addressed include,
19 first, the time frame for estimating low-income support
20 requirements called for by the legislation. It's not clear
21 to us whether the current or projected levels of support is
22 required. Not being certain of that, we determined to
23 attempt to provide both current and projected levels.

24 The second issue that we faced was the fact that
25 there are differences in the ways agencies maintain and

1 format their data. AHCA, or Agency for Health Care
2 Administration, for instance, maintains their data in terms
3 of case loads while others maintain their data in terms of
4 households. Some can run computer matches on addresses,
5 others can perform matches based on Social Security
6 numbers. We had those kinds of concerns. We also found
7 that different types of data formats were utilized by the
8 different agencies, which presented an obstacle in merging
9 data sets, so compatibility would be a key concern there.

10 Our third issue was that agencies were prevented
11 from sharing their data in many instances due to
12 confidentiality requirements of client information.
13 Staff's initial attempt to collect the data was confounded
14 by the fact that the agencies could not share their
15 client-specific data, including names, Social Security
16 numbers and addresses.

17 And then a final issue that came to the fore was
18 that there was limited availability of the agencies'
19 resources and personnel. They are many times concerned
20 with their own internal demands, as you can well imagine,
21 and so this created an extra burden on them, and their
22 availability was sometimes a limiting factor.

23 So now what I would like to do is give a brief
24 overview of our methodology, and we'll look at both the
25 current and projected Lifeline qualifying households within

1 these methodologies. I'll start with what was our
2 methodology for determining the current number of
3 households.

4 First, we asked the agencies to determine certain
5 data for us and report it to us. We asked DCF to identify
6 and eliminate multiple occurrences of current recipient
7 households within Medicaid, Food Stamps and TANF data
8 sets. And then DCF also eliminated from this data set all
9 SSI recipient households. They reported that number to
10 staff.

11 Secondly, AHCA identified and summed the total
12 number of current SSI households, and they reported that
13 number to staff.

14 Thirdly, HUD performed computer matching of
15 households on Public Housing and Section 8 current program
16 participants but then eliminated those households which
17 also participated in TANF or SSI, and they reported that
18 number to staff.

19 Fourthly, DCA submitted the total annual number
20 of LIHEAP participants for 1997 in Florida to staff. They
21 did this rather than run electronic matching of households
22 on the most current monthly client data for two reasons:
23 First, DCA maintains annual rather than monthly data on the
24 number of households participating in LIHEAP, so 1997 data
25 is the most current. Secondly, DCA was unable to perform

1 electronic matching of LIHEAP households and the other
2 programs households since LIHEAP data is distributed in 32
3 field offices, and only some of those field offices store
4 their data in an electronic data set.

5 And then finally, staff summed the quantities of
6 the participating households reported from the DCF, AHCA
7 and HUD. To this amount staff added 50% of the reported
8 number of LIHEAP households. Staff made the assumption
9 that 50% of LIHEAP households were not participating in any
10 of the other five programs. The resulting amount became
11 staff's estimate of the current number of customers
12 eligible to receive Lifeline service in Florida.

13 All right. The second part, of course, then is
14 to develop projections of Lifeline eligible customers, and
15 we determined we would attempt to do this for 1999 and 2000
16 The staff solicited the following program growth data and
17 client participation unit changes from the agencies and
18 from the Florida Office of Economic and Demographic
19 Research, or EDF.

20 First, DCF and EDF determined the growth rates
21 for Medicaid programs and Food Stamps.

22 Secondly, HUD gave specific annual increases
23 expected in its Public Housing and Section 8 programs.

24 Thirdly, DCA indicated that growth and LIHEAP
25 participation was very dependent upon federal funding. DCA

1 defaulted to the current participation level as their proxy
2 of future participation levels until such time as better
3 funding data is available.

4 So finally, staff applied these growth rates and
5 annual increases to the current estimates of Lifeline
6 eligible customers for each of the programs as previously
7 discussed in order to project the number of households
8 eligible to receive Lifeline assistance in Florida in 1999
9 and 2000. Now Yiwen Yu will present the findings of this
10 study.

11 MR. YU: I'm going to use this overhead to show
12 you how we calculated the numbers that you have in a copy
13 of the draft report, and as Bill said, we tried to come up
14 with two different numbers: One is the current number; the
15 other is the projected numbers for the next two years.

16 The biggest problem with, you know, calculating
17 these numbers is that, you know, how to avoid double
18 counting or multiple occurrences or duplication, whatever
19 you want to call it. We used this sort of a van
20 (phonetics) diagram type of picture to show you the
21 potential overlapping relationships among the six
22 qualifying programs. As I said, if you turn the picture
23 upside down it looks like a bug; but this picture shows you
24 that these are the -- you know, you could have also
25 potential overlaps across the six different programs.

1 In Florida, the biggest one is the Medicaid, but
2 within Medicaid, as you can tell, there were two programs:
3 One is SSI; the other is TANF. And TANF is called the
4 wages in Florida. And then these two programs are a
5 hundred percent included in Medicaid program.

6 In Florida, SSI is administered by the Agency for
7 Health Care Administration. The rest of Medicaid, we call
8 it the non-SSI Medicaid, is administered by the Department
9 of Children and Families.

10 The Food Stamp, and you can tell also the Food
11 Stamp has a big overlap with the Medicaid and the other
12 programs, and the Food Stamp is also administered by the
13 DCF. And there are two other relatively smaller programs:
14 Public Housing, Section 8 and the LIHEAP. And Section 8 is
15 administered by HUD, and LIHEAP is DCA.

16 And from this, the Agency for Health Care
17 Administration, they provided us the number for SSI, as
18 Bill already said. The number is 306 thousand. And for
19 the non-SSI Medicaid, the number is 321 thousand, so add
20 them up. The sum of the two give us a total number of
21 Medicaid eligible, total number of Medicaid households,
22 recipient households. The number is 627 thousand.

23 And then the second one would show us the
24 numbers. There are the numbers. So here 627 is the
25 Medicaid number, and that is a very good number. We use

1 that as a base and the fund, the unduplicative part of
2 other programs, and they add up to the number. For
3 instance, for Food Stamps the total number is 417 thousand,
4 and after all the duplications of the all the others, found
5 households receiving like Medicaid. All those subtracted
6 from this number, the left over is only 50,500.

7 For Public Housing -- By the way, these two
8 numbers, Food Stamps and the total Medicaid, they are
9 updated to the August of this year. For Public Housing the
10 total number of households is 151. The time is July of
11 this year, and that is from HUD. And then we asked them to
12 help us identify and eliminate all those duplications, and
13 they could only do that for SSI and the TANF. In other
14 words, they identify all those HUD recipient households who
15 also receive assistance from SSI and the TANF, and we
16 subtract that part from the total number. We come up with
17 103 thousand.

18 And the LIHEAP, they give us a total number of
19 households, recipients, and then the number is 70 thousand,
20 but that is a yearly number. Here the time is a little bit
21 different, a yearly number. That is last year. That is
22 the only number we could get from them. And then this
23 number has -- you know, we have a little problem with, you
24 know, asking them to help us to find and eliminate any
25 duplications, and we could not do any of those, you know,

1 eliminating duplications or anything.

2 So in order to come up with a number, we just
3 take the assumption that 50% of this 70 thousand receiving
4 only LIHEAP assistance, and that would give us 35 thousand.
5 And I know this assumption might be a problem, but compare
6 this size of LIHEAP program to the others, this is a
7 relatively small program, so the potential error might be
8 small.

9 So, and then you sum up the last column to come
10 up with a total number, and that number tells us how many
11 households are eligible for Lifeline programs in Florida
12 at, you know, current number; and this is the current
13 number. The next one we tried to calculate the forecast
14 number, you know, projected for next two years. And, also,
15 the problem is how do you avoid the duplications. And, you
16 know, for the future years, we don't have those addresses
17 for the future recipients, not yet, so the computer cannot
18 do the address match runs yet, so we take the current
19 number as the base. We try to find the growth rate and
20 apply the growth rates to each of these programs and come
21 up with the projected number.

22 For the Medicaid program, we get the growth rates
23 from the Social Service Estimated Conference, which is also
24 the Economic and Demographic Research, that office. For
25 next year the growth rate is 5.6%, and for year 2000 is

1 2.5%; and we applied these numbers for the next two years
2 and come up with the Medicaid eligible households.

3 For Food Stamps, Department of Children and
4 Families, they provide the projected number; and as you can
5 see, that projected the growth rate as negative. The
6 number is getting smaller and smaller. For the next year,
7 the growth rate is negative .17, and for the year 2000 is
8 negative 1.1.

9 And the next program is Public Housing. The
10 project -- the forecast information we got from HUD is,
11 they said just add up one thousand each year to the current
12 number, and they believe that is a reasonable number to
13 use; and that's the only forecast information we got from
14 HUD. So we add one thousand to their current number for
15 the next two years.

16 And again, LIHEAP they couldn't provide a number
17 for the next two years, the projected number, except to say
18 that over the years the budget has no big changes; and then
19 so if the budget does not change, the number of recipient
20 households are not going to change a lot. So we just
21 assumed that it's not going to change for the next two
22 years. And that -- again, that's the only information we
23 have. That might be a problem, but this is the only
24 information we have. And again, that relatively the
25 program is small compared to the others.

1 So we just do these additions, and they come up
2 with the number of households eligible for Lifeline
3 services in Florida for the next two years. And again, our
4 task was to try to come up with the number of eligible
5 households, and that's what we have done. And now we are
6 open to the questions and the comments relating to these
7 numbers. Thank you.

8 MS. SIMS: Do you have a figure for total
9 households in the State of Florida, I mean total households
10 in the State of Florida?

11 MS. DANIEL: Nancy, I'm Patti Daniel. We rely on
12 the Florida Statistical Abstract for that information. I
13 believe it's about five million households in Florida.

14 MS. SIMS: Okay. Do you have -- do you know what
15 the requirements are in order to participate in LIHEAP?

16 MS. DANIEL: We have that data. We don't profess
17 to be experts at it, so I do have that data.

18 MS. SIMS: Can we get a copy of that?

19 MS. DANIEL: Uh-huh.

20 MS. SIMS: And also, what is required to, you
21 know, have Public Housing or Section 8?

22 MS. DANIEL: We have that data, and I might let
23 Yiwen speak to that. We had quite a bit of difficulty
24 getting a bottom line. You cannot go to a Florida statute
25 and find what the eligibility requirements are. I believe

1 there is probably a lot of discretion within the agencies,
2 and it's very difficult. It's not only based on income,
3 it's based on, you know, number of people in the household.
4 Sometimes these benefits go to children. Sometimes they go
5 to the family. There are just a wide variety of issues.

6 MS. SIMS: Yeah, I was mainly looking at --

7 MS. DANIEL: I can give you a best guess.

8 MS. SIMS: -- just those two.

9 MS. DANIEL: Okay. Which were the two again?

10 MS. SIMS: Well, the LIHEAP and the Public
11 Housing and Section 8.

12 MS. DANIEL: Okay.

13 MS. SIMS: Are you all open to anything that we
14 have gleamed from other states? Because we were speaking
15 with some of our regulatory counterparts in Louisiana, and
16 they've been dealing with Universal Service and Lifeline
17 and so forth. And I don't have anything in writing. I
18 mean you are going to have to take -- this was a phone
19 conversation, but it was regarding the LIHEAP and the
20 Public Housing. And basically, they had a conversation
21 with one of the -- a casual conversation with one of the
22 representatives that works on these agencies, and they said
23 that in Louisiana, which of course is probably a high
24 participation state as far as Lifeline eligibility, that
25 99% of those that participate in Public Housing and LIHEAP

1 also participate in the other programs, in one of the other
2 programs. So that puts it a little bit -- if that carries
3 any weight.

4 Now I thought maybe we would try to talk to some
5 of our other states too and see if they have gotten any
6 information. I don't know if other states keep better
7 records or, you know, have any better information, but I
8 think that we are going to go to our other states and see
9 if there is anything else that could help you in estimating
10 on these two areas.

11 MS. DANIEL: We would welcome something more
12 concrete than we currently have. I think for LIHEAP we're,
13 as you can see from Yiwen's discussion, we are particularly
14 at a loss.

15 MS. SIMS: Yeah. Okay.

16 MR. McNULTY: Anything along those lines. It
17 would be good to have some of the background as to how they
18 came up with that estimate. We ran into the problem here
19 as LIHEAP is administered in Florida where some of the
20 field offices maintain the data in electronic format and
21 yet others don't. We basically ran into the problem of not
22 being able to get the whole data set, obviously, so that we
23 considered the possibilities of doing a statistical
24 inference based upon one or two field offices, but then we
25 ran into some confidentiality issues as well; so we would

1 be very interested to find out how that was implemented in
2 those states. It would help us support any estimate that
3 we would use.

4 MS. SIMS: I guess you can appreciate now our
5 predicament in trying to determine whether somebody is
6 actually eligible when we go to these agencies to verify
7 our list. It gets to be pretty hectic.

8 MR. McNULTY: Yes, we have a lot of appreciation
9 for that.

10 MR. YU: For the Lifeline program, we also looked
11 at the eligibility requirements also, and the same thing
12 for the Public Housing, Section 8; but, you know, you look
13 at income requirements. There are other, some other things
14 that you need to pay attention to. For instance, those
15 programs serve recipients on first-come, first-serve basis.
16 So, you know, to be poor is to be, you know, meeting the
17 income level, is the first one; but it doesn't necessarily
18 mean that your income is, you know, is meeting the
19 requirements and then you will get the assistance. It also
20 depends on the funding. If the funding is not sufficient,
21 you will be put on the waiting list. So that would make it
22 maybe differences across the states.

23 MS. DANIEL: And which programs is that
24 applicable?

25 MR. YU: Two programs: LIHEAP and the Public

1 Housing and the Section 8. Thanks.

2 MS. SIMS: I'll see if we can find anything else
3 about Louisiana as well as some of the other states. I
4 don't know if we'll be very successful, but we'll try.

5 MR. McNULTY: We also are attempting to get an
6 update from the Florida LIHEAP administrator on what the
7 prognosis is for funding, federal funding for the program,
8 since that is something that is a determinant for LIHEAP
9 participant -- LIHEAP participation.

10 MR. YU: Also, for the LIHEAP, in terms of data
11 collecting, and there are field offices which, you know,
12 operate and run these programs. They don't -- many of them
13 are not computer automated yet, so that created a potential
14 problem in collecting the most updated data.

15 MR. FONS: This is John Fons. I have a question
16 for Charlie Beck. Charlie, does NASUCA keep any statistics
17 on Lifeline?

18 MR. BECK: I could ask. I don't know offhand.

19 MR. FONS: Okay. You haven't checked on that?

20 MR. BECK: No, I haven't.

21 MR. FONS: Okay.

22 MS. DANIEL: Who? I'm sorry. Who?

23 MR. FONS: NASUCA which is the National
24 Association of State Public Counsels. Close?

25 MR. BECK: Close.

1 MR. FONS: What?

2 MR. BECK: State Utility Consumer Advocates.

3 MR. FONS: State Utility Consumer Advocates,
4 national association thereof.

5 MR. McNULTY: Other comments on the --

6 MR. POUCHER: Earl Poucher of Public Counsel's
7 office. I'd like to ask a question. Is there any data or
8 evidence that would provide information on Medicaid
9 recipients as to whether or not they live in households
10 with other telephone service? And I'm thinking of
11 mother-in-laws who receive Medicaid living in a house with
12 existing telephone service. They probably would not be a
13 candidate for Lifeline, but does anybody know how many
14 mother-in-laws live in houses with telephones?

15 MR. McNULTY: Most of this counting we really
16 relied very heavily upon the agencies for. In this case,
17 of course, it was the Department of Children and Families.
18 And we understand that they keep their case load data and
19 are able to determine by address the number of individuals
20 who are participating in their various programs.

21 MR. POUCHER: Yeah, I see. You've done a good
22 job, or they've done a good job of eliminating duplications
23 where two people in the same household have Medicaid. I
24 think that's -- based on the way the report reads, it's
25 been taken care of; but I'm concerned about the number of

1 people who are Medicaid recipients who live in houses with
2 other people, other families that are not recipients that
3 are not duplicates but people who are wage earners and are
4 not public welfare recipients and have the basic telephone
5 service for the household.

6 A Medicaid recipient, just because they receive
7 Medicaid, is not going to be a candidate for telephone
8 service unless they live in their own house separately; so
9 I would be concerned -- I don't think you can ever put your
10 arms around that number, but I would put a big disclaimer
11 around the 34-million-dollar number and the 815 thousand
12 participants because of the fact that there are many people
13 who receive Medicaid who live in houses with other people
14 who have the telephone service in that house, and I -- I
15 don't think you can find out what that number is, but it
16 deserves to be mentioned as one of the reasons why it's
17 very unlikely that you'll have a hundred percent
18 participation ever or anything approaching that.

19 The second disclaimer I would recommend that you
20 deal with is Lifeline eligible customers who have existing
21 bad debts with the telephone companies. Presently, those
22 customers who have bad debts, even though they are eligible
23 for Lifeline, will not be eligible for telephone service
24 until they pay their bad debt; and if they are Lifeline
25 eligible, why it's unlikely that they are going to be able

1 to do that. So somewhere you've got to take into
2 consideration the fact that there are a lot of customers
3 out there who have bad debts with the telephone companies,
4 and they are not going to get telephone service, even
5 Lifeline telephone service, unless there is a change of
6 rules.

7 MR. McNULTY: So in both of those instances you
8 would say that the, either the estimate or the projections
9 that we came up with were overstated?

10 MR. POUCHER: Yes, very definitely. And as a
11 matter of personal information, every Lifeline eligible
12 customer that I've tried to help to get telephone service
13 has a bad debt with the telephone company and did not get
14 their telephone service.

15 MR. McNULTY: Thank you. Are there any other
16 comments on this portion of the agenda?

17 (NO RESPONSE)

18 MR. McNULTY: Okay. I think that then we could
19 go to Number III. Yes, comments?

20 (NO RESPONSE)

21 MR. McNULTY: This is asking basically for other
22 issues related to determining the amount of support. If
23 there are any issues at this time, any interested persons
24 are welcome to openly discuss it.

25 MR. McCABE: I just have some questions regarding

1 what it is --

2 MR. McNULTY: Could you identify yourself?

3 MR. McCABE: Tom McCabe with TDS Telecom, Quincy.
4 I was interested in terms of what you envision providing to
5 the legislature. Would it be this report here with, you
6 know, some modifications as were discussed, or will you be
7 making a series of recommendations in terms of whether
8 Universal Service -- Lifeline should be funded through a
9 universal service program, how that program should be
10 funded and things of that nature? I mean I think that, you
11 know, based on the number of subscribers today, I don't
12 think that we would need to start out trying to fund 35
13 million dollars; and I'm curious in terms of whether you
14 will be presenting recommendations in terms of, yes, there
15 is a need for Lifeline support. Yes, it should be funded
16 through a universal service fund, and at this time we would
17 project that the funding should be based on X-number of
18 dollars today with updates periodically, maybe on a yearly
19 basis, in terms of actual subscribership and things of that
20 nature because everyone is going to be paying into this
21 fund; and my company, obviously, based on what I would
22 anticipate, number of customers I would have, it's very
23 important to us. Yet at the same time, we will be paying
24 into the fund, and we don't want to be in a situation of
25 paying 35 million dollars -- part of 35 million dollars

1 into the state coffers that are going to sit there unused
2 until you get a hundred percent subscribership.

3 MR. McNULTY: Tom, basically the research and
4 regulatory review, Division of Research and Regulatory
5 Review conducted this study and is forwarding its results
6 to the Division of Communications, and if there are any
7 policy issues to be addressed, it would be addressed by the
8 Division. We are in the process of working together with
9 them to get this report to the legislature, but that's the
10 extent of what our study has been doing. And we have
11 basically put together this report with the assistance of
12 the Division of Communications for factual basis only. We
13 haven't really provided any policy recommendation, per se,
14 and perhaps the Division of Communications might have
15 something to say on the issues that you've presented.

16 MS. MARSH: As far as I know, for now, this is
17 what is going to be inserted into the report. I don't
18 think a lot of other people in communications have seen it
19 besides me, and some policy issues may come up later on, so
20 it's possible there could be some things added to it. We
21 haven't really sat down and discussed this particular
22 report because it just has gotten to us just the same as it
23 has to you. The statute asked for the amount of support,
24 and this is basically -- I view it as kind of a maximum
25 number. Obviously the participation at Lifeline is a whole

1 lot less. In fact, it's even lower now than it was in
2 '97. So obviously you don't need a 34- or
3 36-million-dollar funding, but whether we'll make any
4 recommendations on that or not, I don't know at this time.

5 MR. McNULTY: It sounds like the other workshop
6 will maybe get into some of those issues.

7 MS. MARSH: No.

8 MR. McNULTY: No? Okay. All right. Excuse me.

9 MS. MARSH: At least we don't plan to.

10 MR. McNULTY: Okay.

11 MS. MARSH: Although, if somebody has something
12 they want to bring up, you know, I'd certainly be glad to
13 entertain it.

14 MR. McNULTY: Okay. Other issues that we can
15 address today?

16 MR. PASCHALL: Ed Paschall with AARP. I raise a
17 question here in conjunction with what Mr. Poucher with
18 public counsel mentioned a little bit ago about the fact
19 that he had tried to help quite a number of people get
20 Lifeline assistance and were unable to do so because they
21 had a bad debt with a telephone company already, and while
22 they were qualified for it otherwise, as far as the
23 requirements were concerned, the telephone company would
24 not give it to them because of their bad debt with them.
25 Would there be any way that we could get a number from the

1 combined telephone companies as to how many people they
2 have like that with bad debts? Because if it's only maybe
3 a bad debt for a month or something like that, maybe there
4 would be some way that could be resolved so that they could
5 be included into this program.

6 MR. McNULTY: That's an excellent question, and I
7 think that we can definitely investigate that.

8 MS. SIMS: Let me -- This is Nancy Sims with
9 BellSouth. Let me explain to you what we have been doing
10 for, it's been well over a year now, I think. We
11 instituted what we call a toll credit limit program, and
12 what we do is if a customer -- of course, before we cut a
13 customer off, we will try to work with the customer to work
14 out a payment schedule, and they will agree to go on a --
15 to get a toll block on their line and work out a payment
16 schedule, and we will not cut them off.

17 If they have been disconnected for non-pay and we
18 have not yet -- they have not yet been turned over to a
19 collection agency, because we have certain contracts with
20 collection agencies that we are -- We are in the process
21 of renegotiating those so that we can override some of
22 those. But if they've been disconnected and they have a
23 bad debt, in fact, most of -- a lot of the ones we have
24 tried to contact and send letters to and say, we have a
25 plan now whereby if you will agree to put a toll block on

1 your line and agree to some type of a payment schedule, we
2 will turn your service back on. And I think we've been
3 pretty successful with that, but we can certainly give you
4 a report. I don't know that we can tell you which ones
5 that have bad debts would have been eligible for Lifeline.
6 You know, I don't know, that our records can tell that, but
7 we can certainly give you reports on, you know, what has
8 happened with bad debt as far as before we put the toll
9 credit limit on and after we put the toll credit limit
10 program in.

11 MR. PASCHALL: I think that would be very useful
12 there, and if the other telephone companies would consider
13 doing the same thing, I think that would be very helpful in
14 the total analysis of what you can do to get more of those
15 people back into the loop, if you want to call it such,
16 because that's the main purpose of the whole thing in the
17 first place, is to get them back in there, if they are out.
18 And the other point of it is that, just as she said, if
19 they would agree to toll blocking or just tell them pure
20 and simple that if they want to get back in, that we would
21 do that, but they would have to agree to that toll
22 blocking. Would the other companies -- I think if the
23 other companies would do that, I think we would come up
24 with some very useful figures that may provide some
25 additional support to those people to get some of their

1 debts -- I'm not saying we should pay a two- or
2 three-hundred-dollar bill for some of them that they are
3 not trying to pay themselves, but to help some of them get
4 back in the loop who may be making a strong effort in that
5 area. I think it might be certainly well worthwhile.

6 MR. McNULTY: Are there other telephone companies
7 here today that could maybe give their perspective on their
8 ability to quantify the number of customers with bad debt
9 who don't have the opportunity?

10 MR. POAG: We operate, I think, pretty much the
11 same as BellSouth has described, and I don't know that we
12 would be able to quantify the number that were Lifeline
13 eligible. Possibly you could find out which ones were
14 Lifeline that were disconnected, but I'm not sure how much
15 of a process that is and how long it would take to do it.
16 It would definitely be some sort of a manual process
17 though, I believe.

18 MR. McCABE: For Quincy we basically operate the
19 same way BellSouth does, and again, we would not have any
20 idea whether we had people that had been disconnected that
21 would be eligible for Lifeline. I don't know how we would
22 go about finding that information out. I don't think that
23 that's something that should be -- that burden should be
24 placed upon us to find out who is eligible for Lifeline.

25 MR. McNULTY: But it would be possible to find

1 out the total number of people who have been basically
2 withheld from service due to bad debt considerations?

3 MR. McCABE: We could provide you probably with
4 information of people that we have disconnected. One of
5 the difficulties though is, you know, a lot of times we may
6 have somebody who has been permanently disconnected that,
7 you know, we don't even know whether they still exist in
8 the area. I mean we have a lot of bad debt customers that
9 no longer are in our territory.

10 MR. McNULTY: Okay. Does GTE have any comments
11 on this?

12 MR. SCOBIE: We do the same basic thing Bell
13 does, and I would agree with Tom --

14 MR. McNULTY: You have to come to --

15 MR. SCOBIE: GTE does the same basic thing, I
16 guess, as BellSouth and Sprint as far as dealing with
17 customers that go out non-pay or with bad debt. I am
18 pretty sure we could not quantify those that would be
19 eligible for Lifeline service. As far as total calculation
20 of the total customers that have gone out non-pay, there
21 may be some way to calculate that, but I'm not sure at this
22 time until we go back and check.

23 MR. McNULTY: Thank you for that response.

24 Okay. Are there any other comments at today's
25 workshop?

1 (NO RESPONSE)

2 MR. McNULTY: Okay. Seeing none, this workshop
3 is adjourned.

4 (WHEREUPON, THE WORKSHOP WAS ADJOURNED)

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CERTIFICATE

1
2 STATE OF FLORIDA)
3 COUNTY OF LEON)
4

5 I, NANCY S. METZKE, Certified Shorthand Reporter
6 and Registered Professional Reporter, certify that I was
7 authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing
8 proceedings and that the transcript is a true and complete
9 record of my stenographic notes.

10 DATED this 3rd day of October, 1998.

11 _____
12 NANCY S. METZKE, CCR, RPR
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