

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Federal-State Joint Board on)	CC Docket No. 96-45
Universal Service)	
)	
High-Cost Universal Service Support)	WC Docket No. 05-337

ORDER

Adopted: January 26, 2006

Released: January 26, 2006

By the Deputy Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau:

1. On December 9, 2005, the Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on issues raised by section 254(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit's decision in *Qwest Corp. v. FCC*.¹ Pursuant to the *Notice*, comments were due 30 days from publication in the Federal Register, and reply comments were due 60 days from publication in the Federal Register, or February 10, 2006, and March 13, 2006, respectively. On January 17, 2006, United States Telecom Association (USTelecom) filed a request for a two-month extension of the date for filing comments, and an additional one-month extension of the date for filing reply comments.²

2. We hereby grant in part USTelecom's motion for extension of time to file comments and reply comments. It is the policy of the Commission that extensions of time are not routinely granted.³ We find, however, that USTelecom has shown good cause for an extension of the deadlines for filing comments and reply comments in this proceeding. USTelecom maintains that the *Notice* raises important and complex issues concerning support for universal service to non-rural carriers that likely will generate a substantial number of comments from carriers, state commissions, and other interested parties.⁴ In addition, USTelecom notes that its members have expressed concern about the ability to gather and analyze rate data and respond to the numerous questions raised by the *Notice* within the original

¹ *Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, High-Cost Universal Service Support*, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 05-337, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 05-205 (rel. Dec. 9, 2005) (*Notice*); 47 U.S.C. § 254(b); *Qwest Corp. v. FCC*, 398 F.3d 1222 (10th Cir. 2005).

² US Telecom Request for Extension of Time to File Comments and Reply Comments, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 05-337 (filed Jan. 17, 2006) (Request). Puerto Rico Telephone Company (PRT) filed comments on USTelecom's request for an extension of time. PRT does not object to an extension for the remand issues in the *Notice* but asks that the Commission maintain the original deadlines for comments on the non-rural insular issues. See Puerto Rico Telephone Company Comments on Request for Extension of Time, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 05-337 (filed Jan. 18, 2006). We find that it would be administratively burdensome to establish separate pleading cycles and, thus, we reject PRT's request.

³ 47 C.F.R. § 1.46(a).

⁴ Request at 1.

timeframes.⁵ Although we find that there is good cause for some additional amount of time in light of the complexity of the issues, we are not persuaded to grant the full extension of time requested. We believe that a 45-day extension of the comment period and a 30-day extension of the reply comment period will allow commenters sufficient time to prepare their comments. Accordingly, we find that USTelecom has shown good cause for an extension of time. Comments are due March 27, 2006, and reply comments are due May 26, 2006.

3. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to sections 4(i), 4(j), and 5(c) of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 154(j), and 155(c), and sections 0.91, 0.291, and 1.46 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 0.91, 0.291, and 1.46, the request for extension of time filed by United States Telecom Association, IS GRANTED, to the extent described herein.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Dana R. Shaffer
Deputy Chief
Wireline Competition Bureau

⁵ *Id.* at 2.