



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
45 L St., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>

DA 24-314
Released: March 29, 2024

**DOMESTIC SECTION 214 APPLICATION FILED FOR THE
TRANSFER OF CONTROL OF BUCKLAND TELEPHONE COMPANY TO
HANSON COMMUNICATIONS, INC.**

NON-STREAMLINED PLEADING CYCLE ESTABLISHED

WC Docket No. 24-57

Comments Due: April 12, 2024

Reply Comment Due: April 19, 2024

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau seeks comment from interested parties on an application filed by Buckland Telephone Company (Buckland) and Hanson Communications, Inc. (HCI) (together, Applicants), pursuant to section 214(a) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and sections 63.03-04 of the Commission's rules,¹ requesting consent for the transfer of control of Buckland to HCI.²

Buckland, an Ohio corporation, provides service as a rural incumbent local exchange carrier (LEC) to approximately 378 access lines in the Allen and Auglaize counties of Ohio.³ Buckland also provides other communications services in the same service area and has been designated as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier in Ohio.⁴

HCI, a Minnesota corporation, does not directly offer domestic telecommunications services but, through its eight wholly-owned incumbent LECs, provides service to approximately 10,500 access lines in Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Ohio.⁵ The following U.S. citizens hold a ten% or

¹ See 47 U.S.C. § 214(a); 47 CFR §§ 63.03-04.

² Domestic Section 214 Application Filed for the Transfer of Control of Buckland Telephone Company to Hanson Communications, Inc., WC Docket No. 24-57 (filed Feb. 27, 2024) (Application). On March 22, 2024 Applicants filed a supplement to their domestic section 214 application. Letter from Salvatore Taillefer, counsel to Hanson Communications, Inc., to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket No. 23-401 (filed Mar. 22, 2024) (Supplement). Any action on this domestic section 214 application is without prejudice to Commission action on other related, pending applications.

³ Application at 5; Supplement at 2.

⁴ Application at 5.

⁵ *Id.* HCI wholly owns the following eight incumbent LECs: Clara City Telephone Company, Sacred Heart Telephone Company, Fort Randall Telephone Company d/b/a Mt. Rushmore Telephone Company, Hanson Communications of Ohio, LLC, Starbuck Telephone Company, Telephone Service Company (TSC), The Middle Point Home Telephone Company, and Zumbrota Telephone Company. Application at Exh. C (Hanson

greater interest in HCI: Bruce Hanson (20.51%); Mark Hanson (23.18%); and Susan Anderson (20.51%).⁶

Pursuant to the terms of the proposed transaction, HCI will purchase all outstanding shares of Buckland, except for certain shares already held by HCI, in conjunction with a reverse-subsiary merger between Buckland and a wholly-owned subsidiary of HCI formed specifically for this purpose.⁷ Buckland will be the surviving entity of the merger and will continue to operate as a direct, wholly-owned subsidiary of HCI.⁸

Applicants assert that the proposed transaction is consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity.⁹ Because the proposed transaction is more complex than those accepted for streamlined treatment, and in order to analyze whether the proposed transaction would serve the public interest, we accept the Application for non-streamlined processing.¹⁰

Domestic Section 214 Application Filed for the Transfer of Control of Buckland Telephone Company to Hanson Communications, Inc., WC Docket No. 24-57 (filed Feb. 27, 2024).

GENERAL INFORMATION

The application identified herein has been found, upon initial review, to be acceptable for filing. The Commission reserves the right to return any application if, upon further examination, it is determined to be defective and not in conformance with the Commission's rules and policies.

Interested parties may file comments **on or before April 12, 2024**, and reply comments **on or before April 19, 2024**. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) or by paper.

- Electronic Filers: Comments may be filed electronically by accessing ECFS at <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/>.
- *Paper Filers*: Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, filers must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number.
 - Filings can be sent by commercial overnight courier or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail.¹¹ All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

Communications, Inc. ILEC Affiliate Chart); Supplement at 2 (providing the service area for each of HCI's wholly-owned incumbent LECs). Applicants state that neither HCI nor any of its affiliates holding at least a 10% or greater interest in HCI hold a 10% or greater interest in any other provider of telecommunications services. Supplement at 1.

⁶ Application at 4.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Application at 7-9. Applicants note that there is an adjacency of service areas between Buckland's service area and HCI's affiliate, TSC. Application at 5; *id.* at Exh. B (Buckland Telephone Service Company Study Area Adjacency).

¹⁰ 47 CFR § 63.03(c)(1)(v).

- Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701. U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail must be addressed to 45 L Street, NE, Washington, DC 20554.

People with Disabilities: We ask that requests for accommodations be made as soon as possible in order to allow the agency to satisfy such requests whenever possible. Send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530.

In addition, e-mail one copy of each pleading to each of the following:

- 1) Tracey Wilson, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, tracey.wilson@fcc.gov;
- 2) Gregory Kwan, Competition Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, gregory.kwan@fcc.gov; and
- 3) Jim Bird, Office of General Counsel, jim.bird@fcc.gov.

The proceeding in this Notice shall be treated as a “permit-but-disclose” proceeding in accordance with the Commission’s *ex parte* rules. Persons making *ex parte* presentations must file a copy of any written presentation or a memorandum summarizing any oral presentation within two business days after the presentation (unless a different deadline applicable to the Sunshine period applies). Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentation must (1) list all persons attending or otherwise participating in the meeting at which the *ex parte* presentation was made, and (2) summarize all data presented and arguments made during the presentation. If the presentation consisted in whole or in part of the presentation of data or arguments already reflected in the presenter’s written comments, memoranda or other filings in the proceeding, the presenter may provide citations to such data or arguments in his or her prior comments, memoranda, or other filings (specifying the relevant page and/or paragraph numbers where such data or arguments can be found) in lieu of summarizing them in the memorandum. Documents shown or given to Commission staff during *ex parte* meetings are deemed to be written *ex parte* presentations and must be filed consistent with rule 1.1206(b), 47 CFR § 1.1206(b). Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission’s *ex parte* rules.

To allow the Commission to consider fully all substantive issues regarding the application in as timely and efficient a manner as possible, petitioners and commenters should raise all issues in their initial filings. New issues may not be raised in responses or replies.¹² A party or interested person seeking to raise a new issue after the pleading cycle has closed must show good cause why it was not possible for it to have raised the issue previously. Submissions after the pleading cycle has closed that seek to raise new issues based on new facts or newly discovered facts should be filed within 15 days after such facts are discovered. Absent such a showing of good cause, any issues not timely raised may be disregarded by the Commission.

For further information, please contact Gregory Kwan at (202) 418-1191.

¹¹ Effective March 19, 2020, and until further notice, the Commission no longer accepts any hand or messenger delivered filings. This is a temporary measure taken to help protect the health and safety of individuals, and to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19. See *FCC Announces Closure of FCC Headquarters Open Window and Change in Hand-Delivery Policy*, Public Notice, 35 FCC Rcd 2788 (OS 2020).

¹² See 47 CFR § 1.45(c).

-FCC-