

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

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Telecommunications Carriers Eligible for Universal	)	WC Docket No. 09-197
Service Support	)	
	)	
Applications of T-Mobile US, Inc. and United	)	GN Docket No. 24-286
States Cellular Corporation for Consent to Transfer	)	
Control of Licenses, Authorizations, and Leases	)	
	)	

**ORDER**

**Adopted: August 1, 2025****Released: August 1, 2025**

By the Chief, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau:

1. In this Order, the Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau approves a request filed by United States Cellular Corporation (UScellular) to relinquish its eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) designations in New Hampshire, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia that have been issued by the Federal Communications Commission (Commission).<sup>1</sup> UScellular submitted this request in connection with the approval of a transaction—consummated on August 1, 2025—whereby T-Mobile US, Inc. (T-Mobile) acquired UScellular’s wireless business operations and select spectrum holdings (UScellular/T-Mobile Transaction).<sup>2</sup> T-Mobile’s Assurance Wireless brand is currently designated an ETC in the states at issue—New Hampshire, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.<sup>3</sup> UScellular indicates that T-Mobile commits to providing continued service to UScellular’s eligible Lifeline customers in those states.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United States Cellular Corporation Petition for Relinquishment of Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Designations, WC Docket No. 09-197, GN Docket No. 24-286 (filed Apr. 30, 2025) (UScellular Relinquishment Notice); *High-Cost Universal Service Support, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, WC Docket No. 05-337, CC Docket No. 96-45, Order, 23 FCC Rcd 8834, 8886–87, Appx. B, para. 43 (2008) (granting UScellular’s petition for designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier in certain states).

<sup>2</sup> See UScellular Relinquishment Notice at 1-2; *Applications of T-Mobile Inc. and United Cellular Corporation for Consent to Transfer Control of Licenses, Authorizations and Leases*, GN Docket No. 24-286, Memorandum Opinion and Order, DA 25-605 (WTB/OIA July 11, 2025) (*UScellular/T-Mobile Transfer Approval Order*); Press Release, UScellular, UScellular Completes Sale of Wireless Operations (Aug. 1, 2025), <https://investors.uscellular.com/news/news-details/2025/UScellular-Completes-Sale-of-Wireless-Operations/default.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> See UScellular Relinquishment Notice at 2, 4; Letter from David A. LaFuria, Counsel for United States Cellular Corporation, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, Federal Communications Commission at 1–6 (July 12, 2025), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/10712629409248/1> (UScellular Letter). UScellular notes that Assurance Wireless does not have ETC designations in federally recognized Tribal areas in these states, but that UScellular also does not have any customers in the Tribal areas of these states. UScellular Letter at 3, 6.

<sup>4</sup> See UScellular Relinquishment Notice at 2; UScellular Letter at 1–2, 4.

2. Section 214(e)(6) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (the Act), authorizes the Commission to designate a carrier as an ETC when a state commission lacks jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup> Section 214(e)(4) of the Act provides that the Commission “shall permit” an ETC to relinquish its designation “in any area served by more than one” ETC so long as “the remaining [ETCs] ensure that all customers served by the relinquishing carrier will continue to be served.”<sup>6</sup> Consistent with this statutory requirement, once the requesting ETC makes the requisite showing under section 214(e)(4), a state commission or this Commission grants the request for relinquishment.

3. Pursuant to section 214(e) of the Act, UScellular filed advance notice of its intent to relinquish its Commission-issued ETC designations.<sup>7</sup> UScellular states that various carriers, in addition to T-Mobile’s Assurance Wireless brand, are designated as ETCs in the areas in which it seeks to relinquish its designations,<sup>8</sup> which includes areas formerly eligible to receive mobile legacy high-cost support.<sup>9</sup> UScellular also indicates that to the best of its knowledge, none of the other ETCs serving the relinquished areas need time to purchase or construct additional facilities to continue to serve consumers.<sup>10</sup> UScellular also indicates that after the transaction is consummated, its customers will continue to receive Lifeline service through Assurance Wireless, and T-Mobile will provide notice to each of its current Lifeline customers, advising the customer that although UScellular is discontinuing the provision of Lifeline service, customers may choose to continue with Assurance Wireless or switch to another provider.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, UScellular states that following the UScellular/T-Mobile Transaction, T-Mobile will not impose an early termination fee on any Lifeline customer who changes to another service provider.<sup>12</sup> Based on these circumstances, including our finding that UScellular has demonstrated that various carriers designated as ETCs in the areas in which it seeks to relinquish its designation will continue to serve UScellular’s customers, we conclude that it is appropriate to grant UScellular’s request to relinquish its ETC designations.<sup>13</sup>

4. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to the authority contained in section 214(e)(4) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. 214(e)(4), and the authority delegated in sections 0.91 and 0.291 of the Commission’s rules, 47 CFR §§ 0.91, 0.291, the ETC

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<sup>5</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(6).

<sup>6</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(4).

<sup>7</sup> See UScellular Relinquishment Notice at 6.

<sup>8</sup> See UScellular Relinquishment Notice at 5–6; UScellular Letter at 1–2, 4.

<sup>9</sup> UScellular has stopped receiving mobile legacy high-cost support for periods occurring after the approval of the UScellular/T-Mobile Transaction, and T-Mobile does not receive mobile legacy high-cost support. *UScellular/T-Mobile Transfer Approval Order* at 69, para.131; see also *id.* at 68, para. 130 n.461 (explaining that T-Mobile is not a high-cost ETC in the areas where UScellular receives support and does not request transfer of UScellular’s high-cost support to T-Mobile). The *UScellular/T-Mobile Transfer Approval Order* already addressed Rural Wireless Association comments on UScellular’s petition for relinquishment and so we do not address those comments again here. See *id.* at 67–70, paras. 128–35.

<sup>10</sup> UScellular Relinquishment Notice at 7.

<sup>11</sup> UScellular Letter at 1–2 (stating that Assurance Wireless will contact each customer regarding options going forward). At the time of filing its petition, UScellular indicated that advance notice to its customers was unnecessary because its customers would continue on their current plan with Assurance Wireless without needing to take any action and that such notice would confuse customers due to the lack of a definitive closing date for UScellular’s acquisition by T-Mobile at that time. UScellular Relinquishment Notice at 6 n.15.

<sup>12</sup> UScellular Letter at 6.

<sup>13</sup> UScellular Relinquishment Notice at 1; 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(4).

designations of UScellular in New Hampshire, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, as provided herein, ARE RELINQUISHED, effective upon release.<sup>14</sup>

5. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that UScellular SHALL TRANSMIT a copy of this Order to the Universal Service Administrative Company and the relevant state commissions in New Hampshire, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

6. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to section 1.102(b)(1) of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.102(b)(1), this order SHALL BE EFFECTIVE upon release.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Nicholas E. Page  
Chief  
Telecommunications Access Policy Division  
Wireline Competition Bureau

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<sup>14</sup> USAC shall discontinue the eligibility of the study area codes assigned to UScellular in New Hampshire, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.