



## STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
P. O. BOX 304260  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-4260

TWINKLE ANDRESS CAVANAUGH, PRESIDENT

JEREMY H. ODEN, ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER

CHRIS "CHIP" BEEKER, JR., ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER

JOHN A. GARNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS  
OF THE SOUTH, LLC,**

**PETITION:** For approval to relinquish  
Eligible Telecommunications Carrier ("ETC")  
Designation in Alabama.

**PETITIONER**

**DOCKET 25980**

### **ORDER APPROVING RELINQUISHMENT OF ETC DESIGNATION**

#### **BY THE COMMISSION:**

Due to a scrivener's error, this Order takes the place of and is substituted for the Order entered in this cause on August 2, 2022. The error in the August 2, 2022 Order was an incorrect effective date. This order corrects that.

By filing received June 27, 2022, with a requested effective date of December 1, 2022, Frontier Communications of the South ("Frontier") seeks Commission approval for relinquishment of its ETC designation in the entirety of its current ETC designated area.

Historically, Frontier, as an ETC, was eligible to receive federal universal service funding in accordance with 47 U.S.C. § 254, in exchange for which it has been required to offer supported services pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 54.201(d) and meet the obligations associated with the universal service programs in which it participates. Since its inception, federal universal service funding has included "high-cost" support to deploy and maintain networks in rural and other high-cost areas, as well as reimbursement from the Lifeline Assistance Program ("Lifeline") for offering local telecommunications services to eligible low-income consumers at discounted prices. The \$5.95 per month Lifeline Low-Income subsidy for voice service was scheduled to be eliminated on December 1, 2021. However, the FCC decided to extend the subsidy for another year. Frontier's relinquishment of its ETC designation in Alabama is prompted by changes to the universal service program at the federal level and the phasing-out of all high-cost universal service support, for which Frontier was formally eligible.

In 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(2) and (4) and 47 C.F.R. § 54.205, Congress and the FCC delegated authority to state commissions to designate carriers as an ETC and permit carriers to relinquish their

ETC designation. The standard for relinquishing an ETC designation is set forth in 47 U.S.C. § 214(e)(4), which states, in pertinent part:

A State commission...**shall permit an eligible telecommunications carrier to relinquish its designation as such a carrier in any area served by more than one eligible telecommunications carrier.** An eligible telecommunications carrier that seeks to relinquish its eligible telecommunications carrier designation for an area served by more than one eligible telecommunications carrier shall give advance notice to the State commission...of such relinquishment. (Emphasis added).

Frontier meets the standard for relinquishing its ETC designation because each wire center in the relinquishment area has at least one other designated ETC. Frontier will continue to offer services to customers throughout its service area, including low-income consumers. The only change will be that the Lifeline discount will no longer be available to Frontier's customers. Current Lifeline customer can continue to receive service from Frontier, or they may receive the Lifeline discount from another ETC. As of May 1, 2022, Frontier had only 80 Lifeline customers in Alabama.

Frontier pledged in its Petition to provide notice via U.S. Mail at least 60 days prior to the relinquishment effective date to each of its affected Lifeline customers explaining that Frontier will no longer offer the federal Lifeline discount. Frontier will also send each remaining affected Lifeline customer a second notice letter and a bill message at least 15 days prior to the relinquishment date. All notices will inform each affected customer that the federal voice Lifeline discount can be obtained from another ETC in the area and will provide the link to [lifelinesupport.org](https://lifelinesupport.org) through which a customer may obtain carrier-specific contact information.

Because Frontier will no longer receive any federal high-cost universal service support in Alabama, Frontier seeks an order confirming relinquishment of its ETC status for the entirety of its designated service territory in the State of Alabama. This filing will not authorize Frontier to withdraw any of its underlying legacy voice services. Staff recommends the Commission issue an Order affirming Frontier's relinquishment of ETC designation in all its Alabama service territory.

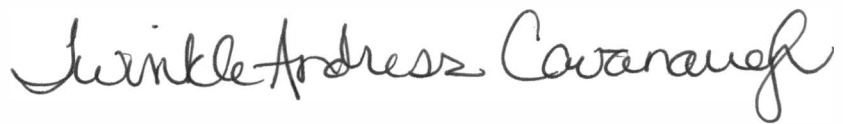
The Commission is of the opinion, and finds, that the public interest will be served by affirming Frontier's statewide relinquishment of its designation as an ETC in Alabama.

**IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED BY THE COMMISSION,** That the request by Petitioner, Frontier Communications of the South, LLC, to relinquish its ETC designation in Alabama, as set out herein, is hereby approved.

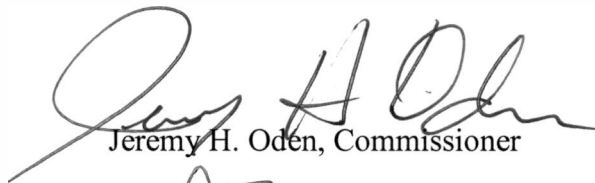
**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED BY THE COMMISSION,** That this Order shall be effective as of the requested effective date of December 1, 2022.

**DONE** at Montgomery, Alabama, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2022.

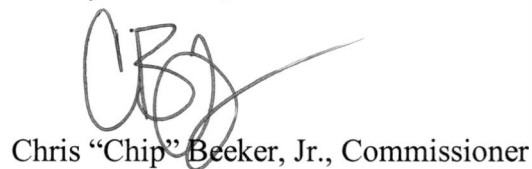
ALABAMA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



Twinkle Address Cavanaugh, President

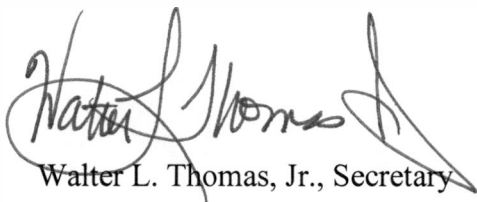


Jeremy H. Oden, Commissioner



Chris "Chip" Beeker, Jr., Commissioner

ATTEST: A True Copy



Walter L. Thomas, Jr., Secretary