

**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17105-3265**

**RECALCULATION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE
SURCHARGE**

**PUBLIC MEETING
May 19, 2006
MAY-2006-FUS-0443*
Docket No. M-00900239F0010**

MOTION OF COMMISSIONER KIM PIZZINGRILLI

By order entered May 29, 1990, the Commission implemented the Pennsylvania Telephone Relay Service ("TRS") which provisions intrastate relay telecommunication service for the deaf, hearing and/or speech impaired population of Pennsylvania. In July 1995, the Telecommunications Device Distribution Program ("TDDP") was established to provide specialized telecommunications devices such as text telephones and amplifiers to qualified persons. 35 P.S. §6701.1 *et. seq.* The funding for both of these programs comes from a surcharge added to the monthly bills of end-users. In 2005, the Universal Telecommunications and Print Media Access Act established the Print Media Access System Program ("PMASP"). 35 P.S. § 6701.2. The PMASP is a telephone access system that provides access to national and local newspapers to persons who are blind. Pursuant to the law, a portion of the total TRS/TDDP surcharge "may be used to fund" the PMASP. 35 P.S. § 6701.4(c).

Currently, the monthly TRS/TDDP surcharge per access line for residential customers is \$.07 and the surcharge for business customers is \$.10. Every June, the Commission assesses each program's projected expenditures and available funds to determine whether the current surcharge needs to be revised. This year, Staff is recommending that the total TRS/TDDP surcharge to residential customers increase by \$.02 without any recommended increase for the surcharge to business. This is accomplished through the elimination of \$.01 from both the residential customers and businesses for TDDP but a \$.01 increase to residential customers for the TRS portion. Additionally, staff proposes that the PMASP program be funded through the establishment of another fund within the overall TRS/TDDP surcharge with a \$.01 allocation to residential customers and a \$.01 allocation to business customers.¹

While Staff's overall recommendation results in a \$.02 increase in the surcharge to residential and no increase to business customers, a separate assessment for the PMASPs within the existing structure of the TRS/TDDP surcharge results in an unacceptable over-collection of the

Category	2005-2006		2006-2007	
	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Business</i>
TRS	\$0.06	\$0.09	\$0.08	\$0.09
TDDP	\$0.01	\$0.01	\$0.00	\$0.00
PMASP	N/A	N/A	\$0.01	\$0.01
Total Surcharge	\$0.07	\$0.10	\$0.09	\$0.10

¹

money necessary to fund the program.² Since the law creating PMASP does not require the creation of another fund and gives the Commission discretion regarding using the TRS/TDDP surcharge to fund PMASP, I will move that the reserve created by the surcharge to fund the TRS program be allocated to the PMASP. Since we are constrained by imposing no less than \$.01 for a surcharge, the more pragmatic approach would be to utilize the excess TRS funding to support the initial year of funding the PMASP. The result of this would be a \$.01 increase to residential customers and a \$.01 decrease to business customers with funding adequate for the needs of the PMASP.

The allocation of the TRS reserve to the PMAPS this year should not be used as precedent for future funding and only the amount requested by L&I shall be allocated from this year's TRS reserve. We anticipate that since this is the initial year of PMASP funding, Staff will work closely with L&I to monitor the program needs on a going-forward basis and to ensure adequate controls are in place to monitor the accounting of the three separate programs.

THEREFORE, I MOVE:

1. The Bureau of Fixed Utility Services, in conjunction with Law Bureau, prepare an Order consistent with this Motion.

Date: MAY 19, 2006



KIM PIZZINGRILLI, COMMISSIONER

² Last year there were no 2005-06 PMASP expenses submitted to the Commission from the Department of Labor & Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (L&I). Historically, this program was funded by federal grants which expire June 30, 2006. Staff's current proposal would result in contributions permitting the funding of the PMASP program in excess of what L&I estimates will be necessary for this year.