

**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120**

**OFFICE OF CONSUMER ADVOCATE,
OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
ADVOCATE**

**PUBLIC MEETING OF MAY 9, 2024
3037574-ALJ
DOCKET NO. C-2023-3037574**

v.

**COMMONWEALTH TELEPHONE
COMPANY, LLC d/b/a FRONTIER
COMMUNICATIONS TELEPHONE
COMPANY**

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN STEPHEN M. DeFRANK

Today, the Commission approves in its entirety and without modification a settlement between the Office of Consumer Advocate, the Office of Small Business Advocate and Frontier Communications. Frontier is the incumbent local exchange carrier in 21 counties in Pennsylvania and has over 100,000 customers. The settlement is in response to the joint formal complaint filed by the OCA and the OSBA against Frontier in which they alleged that customers of Frontier experienced outages that lasted days and weeks, outages that reoccurred, noise on their lines, difficulty reaching customer service representatives, inconvenient appointments for repair visits and repair appointments that were not honored, among other things.

Throughout this proceeding, multiple public input hearings were held in the service territory where nearly 100 customers testified. All of the witnesses testified that they have experienced various service quality problems, including frequent telephone outages, frequent internet service outages and slow internet speeds. In addition, the parties exchanged expert testimony regarding these matters as well.

The settlement between the parties is comprehensive and significant. Notably, the settlement provides that Frontier will make capital expenditures in excess of \$100 million in the service territory over the course of four years. Certainly, this is a significant investment in infrastructure in Pennsylvania that will go a long way toward providing these 100,000 customers with adequate and reliable local telephone service as well as internet access.

In addition, the settlement goes further by also obtaining commitments regarding customer remedies and credits, customer refunds, medical certification, addressing the most troublesome wire centers, quarterly wire center reporting, rate caps for small business customers, dedicated customer support and workforce development, among other things. The comprehensive nature of

the settlement is substantial and demonstrates the gravity of the situation these customers have been experiencing.

I commend the OCA and OSBA for bringing the joint formal complaint that initiated this proceeding and for effectively advocating for Frontier's customers who have been experiencing these issues for too long. I gladly support approving the settlement today.

May 9, 2024

Date

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Stephen M. DeFrank", written over a horizontal line.

Stephen M. DeFrank

Chairman