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# Southwestern Bell

December 29, 1998

The Honorable Dale Hardy Roberts Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge Missouri Public Service Commission 301 West High Street, Floor 5A Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

FILED DEC 2 9 1998 Missouri Public Service Commission

Re: Case No. TO-99-227

Dear Judge Roberts:

Enclosed, for filing in the above-captioned case, are an original and fourteen copies of the reply of Southwestern Bell Telephone Company to Staff's Response to the Office of Public Counsel's Motion to Modify Procedural Schedule.

Thank you for bringing this matter to the attention of the Commission.

Very truly yours, Paul G. Lane / TM Paul G. Lane

Enclosure

cc: All Attorneys of Record



BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

## OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

FILED DEC 2 9 1998 Service Commission

Application of Southwestern Bell Telephone Company to Provide Notice of Intent to File an Application for Authorization to Provide In-Region InterLATA Services Originating in Missouri Pursuant to Section 271 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996

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Case No. TO-99-227

## REPLY OF SOUTHWESTERN BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY TO STAFF'S RESPONSE TO THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC COUNSEL'S <u>MOTION TO MODIFY PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE</u>

COMES NOW Southwestern Bell Telephone Company (hereafter "SWBT") and for its Reply to Staff's Response to The Office of the Public Counsel's Motion to Modify Procedural Schedule (Staff's Response) states as follows:

1. In its Response, Staff proposes an entirely new process that would likely be an extremely lengthy and resource draining exercise that would not appreciably assist the Commission in the resolution of the issues presented to it in this case. For the reasons set forth herein, SWBT respectfully requests the Commission to reject the Staff's proposal.

2. Staff's Response was filed on December 24, 1998, but was not received by SWBT until late in the afternoon of December 28, 1998. Accordingly, this is the first opportunity that SWBT has to respond to the Staff's proposal.

3. Staff essentially requests the Commission to completely eradicate the procedural schedule that it just adopted on December 9, 1998. Staff provides no explanation or rationale, however, of the changed circumstances since the December 9, 1998 Order that would justify such a reversal by the Commission. Staff's proposal is particularly difficult to understand, given that Staff itself authorized SWBT to propose a procedural schedule that is similar (although not identical) to that adopted by the Commission in its December 9, 1998 Order.

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4. Staff's proposal is that the Commission scrap the procedural process and encourage the parties to engage in some ill-conceived collaborative process that lacks structure and direction and would simply be a cause for substantial delay and unnecessary use of resources. Staff's proposal hinges on its view that performance parameters are a key element to this case and should be resolved separately. There are at least two major defects with Staff's proposal.

First, the issues involved in a Section 271 filing are substantially broader than the issue of performance parameters. The determination of the public interest, and the satisfaction of the 14 point checklist involve matters in addition to performance parameters. Even within the 14 point competitive checklist, many of the issues do not involve performance parameters, and some of the checklist items do not pertain to performance parameters in any respect (e.g., reciprocal compensation).

Second, a collaborative process is only helpful, if at all, after the Commission has made its determination as to which checklist items have been met, and where deficiencies exist. The collaborative process was used in Texas in this respect, and was designed to expedite the resolution of the deficiencies identified by the Commission. It would be

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wholly inappropriate to utilize a collaborative process before the Commission has made its determination as to which checklist items have been met and what deficiencies exist in other checklist items, if any. Without the structure of a Commission decision outlining any deficiencies, a collaborative process would have no reasonable chance of limiting, much less resolving, the issues which the Commission must ultimately decide. It would be an exercise for opponents of SWBT's entry into the interLATA market to devise an ever expanding list of issues and to debate them interminably. Given the incentives of the parties involved, there is simply no reasonable prospect that agreement would be reached on any significant matters without direction and a preliminary decision from the Commission.

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5. Nor can it be said that a collaborative process, even following a Commission decision determining any deficiencies in the checklist in Missouri, would necessarily be of value. While the Texas collaborative process was designed to preclude parties from raising new issues, and was instead designed to be an expedited procedure, it actually has been an extremely lengthy process which has required dedication of massive resources that has not led to resolution of many of the issues identified. (Where agreement was reached, however, these matters have generally been adopted by SWBT for use in Missouri.) The Commission may choose to inquire of the parties their relative views of the collaborative process during the hearings scheduled for February 1-11, assuming the Commission believes that such a process will have any value.

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WHEREFORE, for all the foregoing reasons, SWBT requests the Commission to

reject the Staff's proposal in response to the Motion of the Office of the Public Counsel

to Modify the Procedural Schedule in this case.

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Respectfully submitted,

SOUTHWESTERN BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY

By Paul G. Lane Tm

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#### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing Reply to Staff's Response to The Office of the Public Counsel's Motion to Modify Procedural Schedule was served by first-class, postage prepaid U.S. Mail, on all parties on the attached service list this 29% day of December, 1998.

hul G. Jane /m

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