

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

In the Matter of Big River Broadband d/b/a)	
Circle Fiber Relinquishing of Eligible)	<u>File No. DD-2026-0111</u>
Telecommunications Carrier (ETC))	
Designation)	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

COMES NOW the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission (Staff)
and for its *Staff Recommendation* states as follows:

1. On October 22, 2025, Big River Broadband d/b/a Circle Fiber filed a request to relinquish its designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC), effective December 22, 2025. Circle Fiber stated that it does not have any Lifeline customers in Missouri and therefore no existing customers will be impacted by the relinquishment.¹

2. Commission Rule 20 CSR 4240-31.015.4 states that relinquishment of ETC status is accomplished by providing a letter signed by an authorized company official or representative to the Commission at least 60 days prior to the relinquishment of the ETC status. The rule also requires compliance with 47 U.S.C. Section 214(e)(4), which states:

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 to an area served by more than one eligible telecommunications carrier shall give advance notice to the State commission ... of such relinquishment.

* * *

¹ On August 12, 2022, in Case No. DA-2022-0331 the company was granted ETC designation in Missouri.

Prior to permitting a telecommunications carrier designated as an eligible telecommunications carrier to cease providing universal service in an area served by more than one eligible telecommunications carrier, the State Commission ... shall require the remaining eligible telecommunications carrier or carriers to ensure that all customers served by the relinquishing carrier will continue to be served, and shall require sufficient notice to permit the purchase or construction of adequate facilities by any remaining eligible telecommunications carrier.

5. As stated in its request, Circle Fiber does not have any Lifeline customers in Missouri and therefore no existing customers will be impacted by the relinquishment. In addition, there are other designated ETCs serving these areas, ensuring that Missouri consumers will continue to have access to supported services if needed. As explained in Staff's *Memorandum*, attached hereto as Appendix A, Staff recommends the Commission approve the relinquishment of Big River Broadband d/b/a Circle Fiber's ETC designation in Missouri, effective December 22, 2025.

6. The Commission need not hold a hearing, if, after proper notice and opportunity to intervene, no party requests such a hearing. *State ex rel. Rex Deffenderfer Enterprises, Inc. v. Public Service Commission*, 776 S.W.2d 494 (Mo. App. W.D. 1989).

WHEREFORE, Staff respectfully recommends the Commission grant Circle Fiber's request to relinquish its ETC designation in Missouri effective December 22, 2025; and grant such other and further relief as is just in the circumstances.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Mark Johnson

MARK JOHNSON

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Commission

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing was served by electronic mail, or First Class United States Postal Mail, postage prepaid, on this 20th day of November, 2025, to all counsel of record.

/s/ Mark Johnson

MEMORANDUM

To: Missouri Public Service Commission Official Case File
Case No. DD-2026-0111

From: Kari Salsman, Senior Research/Data Analyst
John VanEschen, Regulatory Compliance Manager
Telecommunications Department

Subject: Staff's Recommendation for Big River Broadband d/b/a Circle Fiber's
Notice of Relinquishment of Its Eligible Telecommunication
Carrier Designation.

Date: November 20, 2025

On October 22nd, 2025, Big River Broadband d/b/a Circle Fiber (Circle Fiber) filed a request for the Missouri Public Service Commission (Commission) to relinquish its Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) designation in the State of Missouri, effective December 22, 2025.¹

The requirements for relinquishment of ETC status is contained in Missouri Commission rule 20 CSR-4240-31.015(4). This rule indicates a company can relinquish its ETC designation by providing a letter signed by an authorized company official or representative at least sixty (60) days prior to relinquishing ETC status demonstrating compliance with 47 U.S.C. section 214(e)(4). These federal requirements are codified in FCC rule 47 CFR 54.205 and essentially are intended to ensure the affected area will continue to be served by at least one ETC. Circle Fiber has no subscribers and other ETCs serve the affected area.

Staff recommends the Commission approve the relinquishment of Big River Broadband d/b/a Circle Fiber's ETC designation in Missouri, effective December 22, 2025.

¹ On August 12, 2022, in Case No. DA-2022-0331 the company was granted ETC designation in Missouri.