



Montana Public Service Commission

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PSC Urges Qwest to Reconsider Refusal to Apply for Broadband Funding

The leadership of the Montana Public Service Commission (PSC) is very concerned that phone giant Qwest will not be applying to a new \$4 billion federal grant program designed to help pay for bringing broadband to underserved areas of the country, including much of rural Montana, and has written the company asking them to reconsider their decision.

"It is mind-boggling to me that Qwest would turn its back on this opportunity," said PSC Vice Chair Ken Toole. "This grant is specifically designed for rural areas underserved by this technology. By not applying, Qwest is forcing Montanans to wait even longer to catch up with broadband technology that has been readily available for years in much of the rest of the country."

"I hope Qwest reconsiders," added PSC Chair Greg Jergeson. "It would be a real shame to let this chance to bring needed service to their customers slide by. Broadband is needed in rural homes, schools, and businesses all across Montana; delaying its implementation any longer than necessary is irresponsible."

Qwest is the 4th largest local phone service company serving a 14-state path stretching from Iowa to the Pacific Northwest and southern Arizona with much of rural America in its territory.

Made up of 5 elected commissioners, the PSC works to ensure that Montanans receive safe and reliable service from regulated public utilities while paying reasonable rates. Utilities regulated by the PSC generally include private investor-owned natural gas, electric, telephone, water, and sewer companies. In addition, the PSC regulates certain motor carriers, and oversees natural gas pipeline safety and intrastate railroad safety.

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