

March 6, 2008

COMMENT DEADLINES SET FOR THREE IMPORTANT USF PROCEEDINGS

On March 4, 2008 the three items relating to reform of the Universal Service Fund (“USF”), adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission”) on January 29, 2008 were published in the Federal Register, thereby establishing the comment deadlines on each of the three Notice of Proposed Rulemakings (“NPRMs”): *High Cost Universal Service Support* docket, WC Docket No. 05-337; CC Docket No. 96-45, FCC 08-22 (*Joint Board Comprehensive High Cost Recommended Decision Notice*); WC Docket No. 05-337; CC Docket No. 96-45, FCC 08-4 (*Identical Support Rule Notice*); and WC Docket No. 05-337; CC Docket No. 96-45, FCC 08-5 (*Reverse Auctions Notice*). Comments in these proceedings are due on or before **April 3, 2008** and reply comments are due on or before **May 5, 2008**.

The FCC is in the midst of an effort to achieve comprehensive reform of the high-cost support fund, and the three NPRMs tentatively adopt most of the recommendations of the USF Joint Board to: (1) place an interim cap on the amount of high-cost support available to competitive ETCs; (2) require that high-cost support be based on a carrier’s own costs in the same way that rural phone companies’ support is based; and (3) implement reverse auctions to distribute universal service support. The Commission seeks comment on a number of issues related to implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Board that will dramatically affect competitors who participate in the Fund.

If you would like to file Comments in any of these proceedings, or have any questions regarding the proceedings, please contact Ross Buntrock (rbuntrock@wcsr.com), Jonathan Canis (jcanis@wcsr.com), Mike Hazzard (mhazzard@wcsr.com), Jennifer Kashatus (jkashatus@wcsr.com) or Danielle Benoit (dbenoit@wcsr.com).

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