

BEFORE

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Application of)
AT&T Communications of Ohio, Inc.) Case No. 98-529-TP-ATA
to Establish Credit Limits.)

FINDING AND ORDER

The Commission finds:

- (1) On March 31, 1998, AT&T Communications of Ohio, Inc. (AT&T or Applicant) filed an application for tariff approval with the Commission, requesting authority to establish credit limits for its existing, as well as its new customers. The credit limits will apply only to those customers to whom AT&T bills directly.
- (2) AT&T is proposing to establish the credit limits based upon credit scores assigned by commercial credit reporting agencies or based upon the customer's payment history with AT&T. Customers will receive prior notification of their credit limit. AT&T is proposing to furnish customers with a letter, when the customer approaches 80 percent of their credit limit, in compliance with the Minimum Telephone Service Standards (Chapter 4901:1-5, Ohio Administrative Code), as promulgated by the Commission in Case No. 96-1175-TP-ORD. In addition, customers will also be notified by a prerecorded announcement which will direct them to a customer service representative.

In the event that the established credit limit is exceeded on an account, access to AT&T's long distance services, including 1+, 0+, and all 900/976/700 calls will be restricted, where facilities are available. Access to local calling, emergency services (9-1-1), 800, and 888 calls will not be affected. Customers attempting to access restricted services will be routed automatically to a recorded announcement and a service representative, indicating the information and procedure regarding service restoration.

- (3) An Attorney Examiner's Entry was issued on May 1, 1998, suspending this case from automatic approval, in order to give the Commission and the Staff additional time to review the merits of this case.
- (4) On June 17, 1998, AT&T amended its tariff.

- (5) On March 29, 1999, AT&T notified the Commission that it wished to withdraw the instant application. However, on December 16, 1999, AT&T rescinded its request to withdraw this application and stated that it wished to proceed with the application.
- (6) At Staff's request, the application, consisting of the tariff and customer notices, were further amended on February 14, 2000, and February 15, 2000, for purposes of clarification.
- (7) After a thorough review of this application, Staff agreed with the proposal and, therefore, has recommended its approval by the Commission.
- (8) This application has been filed pursuant to Section 4909.18, Revised Code, and the Commission finds, as the Applicant alleges, that it is not for an increase in any rate, joint rate, toll, classification, charge, or rental and does not appear to be unjust or unreasonable and should be approved. Our approval of AT&T's application is contingent upon the fact that AT&T is prohibited from using the results of a credit check to determine a customers' eligibility for service. Rather, the credit limit merely serves as a cap on the level of toll usage, which may be issued to a customer. Further, we note that AT&T, as a new entrant carrier, must comply with the deposit requirements found in Chapters 4901:1-5 and 4901:1-17, Ohio Administrative Code. Therefore, the Commission finds it unnecessary, in light of the above, to hold a hearing in this matter. Finally, we direct our Consumer Services Department to monitor AT&T's compliance with the approved toll cap provision.

It is, therefore,

ORDERED, That the proposed application, as amended, be approved. It is, further,

ORDERED, That Applicant is authorized to file in final form three complete printed copies of its final tariff consistent with the Finding and Order. Applicant should file its tariff under one cover letter which references both this case number and its respective "TRF" case number. It is, further,

ORDERED, That the effective date of the new tariff shall be a date not earlier than both the date of this Finding and Order and the date upon which three complete printed copies of final tariffs are filed with the Commission. The new tariff shall be effective for services rendered on or after such effective date. It is, further,

ORDERED, That nothing in this Finding and Order shall be binding upon this Commission in any subsequent investigation or proceeding involving the justness or reasonableness of any rate, charge, rule, or regulation. It is, further,

ORDERED, That this case be closed of record. It is, further,

ORDERED, That a copy of this Finding and Order be served upon the Applicant.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

Alan R. Schriber, Chairman

Ronda Hartman Fergus

Craig A. Glazer

Judith A. Jones

Donald L. Mason

NHG:sm