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Docket No. 3783

In Re: Generic Hearings to Establish Rules and Regulations Relating to Providers of Alternative Operator Services

ORDER RESCINDING NOVEMBER 14, 1988 ORDER AND CANCELING REMAINING AOS CERTIFICATES

I. Background

In Administrative Session on March 4, 2025, the Georgia Public Service Commission approved the issuance of a Notice of Inquiry ("NOI") to Alternative Operator Services ("AOS") certificate holders in Docket No. 3783. The purpose of the NOI was to determine if any AOS certificate holders were actively providing AOS services as described in the November 14, 1988 order in Docket No. 3783:

> AOS is a term applied to resellers of interexchange telephone service who provide their services primarily through the use of live or mechanical operators. AOS providers have been characterized as "alternate" providers of operator services because, until recently, only AT&T and the local exchange companies provided operator services. AOS companies provide traditional operator services such as collect, calling card and third party number billing on toll calls. AOS companies primarily provide their services to aggregators of traffic in the transient market, such as hotels, motels, and hospitals and private pay phone operators. The AOS providers typically enter into contracts with the traffic aggregators under which the AOS company is selected as the aggregator's interexchange toll carrier. Calls placed over the aggregator's lines are routed to the AOS provider in the same manner as any other reseller or interexchange carrier.
>
> The incentive for the traffic aggregator is the payment of commissions by the operator services provider to the traffic aggregator. Commissions are paid to the hotel, motel, hospital or other institution based upon the revenues collected by the operator services provider. In addition, the operator services provider may bill

the customer a surcharge imposed by the aggregator that it will remit to the aggregator when collected.

November 14, 1988 Order in Docket No. 3783, pp. 2-3.

As of this year, only 30 AOS certificates remain active with the Commission. Of those, only a small number are complying with the requirement in the November 14, 1988 Order to file a list of traffic aggregators on a semi-annual basis:

> **Each AOS provider shall separately file a list of those traffic aggregators with which it has contracted to provide services. The list shall be updated no less than every six months.** The customer lists submitted by the AOS provider shall be deemed confidential and proprietary and not subject to public disclosure as provided in O.C.G.A. Section 50-18-72(b).

Id. at 29-30. Emphasis added.

The NOI was sent to every active AOS certificate holder on March 4, 2025. The NOI requested responses to the following questions:

1. If you have not filed a semi-annual aggregator report in the past six months, do you currently have any aggregator contracts to report? If an aggregator report was filed in the past six months, so state.
2. Does your company provide AOS services as defined and described in the November 14, 1988 Order in Docket No. 3783?
3. Are you currently providing *any* services under your AOS certificate that cannot be provided under another certificate of authority (e.g., Reseller, Interexchange Service Carrier, etc.) issued by the Commission?
4. If the answer to questions 2 and 3 is no, would you be willing to voluntarily relinquish your AOS certificate?

Responses to the NOI were due by 4:00 p.m. on April 3, 2025. Staff received return mail for three AOS certificate holders and only one response to the NOI, which was filed by Verizon Long Distance LLC, Verizon Select Services Inc., and XO Communications Services, LLC (collectively "Verizon"). Verizon answered that it (1) has "not found any aggregator contracts that are still in service," (2) has "not found any such service arrangements" for AOS services as defined and described in the November 14, 1988 order, (3) is "not aware of any such services" that it is providing under its AOS certificates that cannot be provided under another certificate of authority, and (4) that it was willing to voluntarily relinquish its AOS certificates. *Verizon response to NOI, pp. 1-2*

II. Staff Recommendation

Given the dwindling number of active AOS certificates issued by the Commission, the lack of response to the NOI, and the apparent obsolescence of the actual service authorized by the certificates, Staff recommended that the Commission rescind the November 14, 1988 order in Docket No. 3783. Rescinding this order will eliminate all regulations pertaining to AOS service, including the certification process. Staff further recommended that the Commission cancel all remaining active AOS certificates.

III. Commission Decision

The Commission adopts the Staff's recommendation for the reasons stated therein.

* * * * *

WHEREFORE, it is

ORDERED, that the November 14, 1988 order in Docket No. 2783 is hereby rescinded.

ORDERED FURTHER, that all remaining active AOS certificates are hereby canceled.

ORDERED FURTHER, that a motion for reconsideration, rehearing, oral argument, or any other motion shall not stay the effective date of this Order, unless otherwise ordered by the Commission.

ORDERED FURTHER, that jurisdiction over this matter is expressly retained for the purpose of entering such further Order(s) as this Commission may deem just and proper.

The above by action of the Commission in Administrative Session on the 6th day of May 2025.

Sallie Tanner
Executive Secretary

5-7-25
DATE

Jason Shaw
Chairman

5-7-25
DATE