

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Qwest Corporation
Designated Eligible Carrier – Partial Relinquish
Application

Case No. PU-25-233

AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE BY CERTIFIED MAIL

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
COUNTY OF BURLEIGH

Geralyn R. Schmaltz deposes and says that:

she is over the age of 18 years and not a party to this action and, on the **27th day of February 2026**, she deposited in the United States Mail, at Bismarck, North Dakota, **one** envelope with certified postage, return receipt requested, fully prepaid, securely sealed and containing a photocopy of:

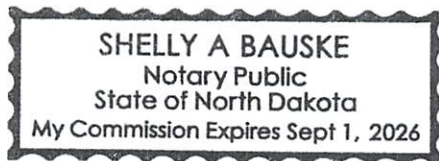
- **Affidavit of Service by Certified Mail with the Order on Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Designation originally mailed 19 February 2026**

The envelope was addressed as follows:

Jason Topp
Assistant General Counsel
Qwest Corporation dba CenturyLink QC
200 S. 5th St. Room 2200
Minneapolis, MN 55402
Cert. No9589 0710 5270 2708 2432 36

Each address shown is the respective addressee's last reasonably ascertainable post office address.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
This **27th day of February 2026**.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Geralyn R. Schmaltz", written over a horizontal line.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shelly A Bauske", written over a horizontal line.
Notary Public

SEAL

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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Geralyn R. Schmaltz deposes and says that:

she is over the age of 18 years and not a party to this action and, on the **19th day of February 2026**, she deposited in the United States Mail, at Bismarck, North Dakota, **two** envelopes with certified postage, return receipt requested, fully prepaid, securely sealed and containing a photocopy of:

- **Order on Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Designation**

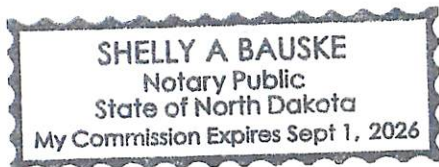
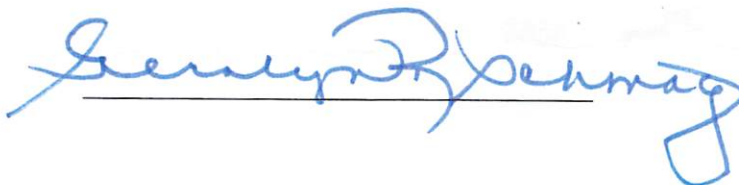
The envelopes were addressed as follows:

Jason Topp
Assistant General Counsel
200 S. 5th St. Room 2200
Minneapolis, MN 55402
Cert. No. 9589 0710 5270 2708 2431 99

Benjamin Dickens, Jr.
Blooston Mordkfsky Dickens & Prendergast LLP
2120 L Street N.W. Ste 825
Washington D.C. 20037
Cert. No. 9589 0710 5270 2708 2432 05

Each address shown is the respective addressee's last reasonably ascertainable post office address.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
This **19th day of February 2026**.



Notary Public

SEAL

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

**Qwest Corporation
Designated Eligible Carrier – Partial Relinquish
Application**

Case No. PU-25-233

ORDER ON ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER DESIGNATION

February 18, 2026

Discussion

On August 1, 2025, Qwest Corporation (Qwest) filed an application with the Commission under 47 U.S.C. section 214(e)(4) and 47 C.F.R. section 54.205, requesting relinquishment of its designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) in the area currently known as the Leonard Exchange. Qwest was designated as an ETC for the purpose of receiving federal universal service support in North Dakota by the Commission on December 17, 1997, under the name of U S West Communications, Inc., which was subsequently merged with Qwest.

On August 7, 2025, the Commission issued a Notice of Opportunity for Comment providing until close of business on October 10, 2025, to receive comments.

On September 30, 2025, Griggs County Telephone Company (Griggs) filed comments.

On October 10, 2025, Halstad Telephone Company, Qwest Corporation, BEK Communications Cooperative, Dakota Central Telecommunications Cooperative, Polar Communications Mutual Aid Corporation, Consolidated Telcom, Red River Rural Telephone Association, and the Broadband Association of North Dakota filed comments.

Also on October 10, 2025, Griggs filed a request for intervention in the proceeding and a request for hearing.

Under 47 U.S.C. section 214(e)(4) and 47 C.F.R. section 54.205, the Commission shall permit a carrier to relinquish its ETC designation for an area served by more than one eligible telecommunications carrier. 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. The state commission shall

establish a time, not to exceed one year after the state commission approves such relinquishment under this section, within which such purchase or construction shall be completed.

Griggs' comments, request for intervention, and request for a hearing does not oppose Qwest's requested relinquishment of its ETC designation, but rather seeks to litigate issues related to Qwest's Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN).

Halstad Telephone Company, BEK Communications Cooperative, Dakota Central Telecommunications Cooperative, Polar Communications Mutual Aid Corporation, Consolidated Telcom, Red River Rural Telephone Association, and the Broadband Association of North Dakota comments support Griggs' assertions and purport additional issues related to Qwest's CPCN.

The Commission has reviewed the documents in this proceeding and finds:

1. There is more than one ETC serving in the Leonard Exchange. The alternative ETC's include Griggs and multiple wireless carriers.
2. Qwest provided advanced notice to the Commission of its intent to relinquish its ETC designation for the Leonard Exchange.
3. There are 17 voice subscribers currently being served by Qwest in the Leonard Exchange. Those subscribers have the option to port their service to Griggs or a wireless service, purchase connected voice service with air-line from Qwest or disconnect service. Qwest has provided multiple notices to each subscriber including a face to face discussion.

The Commission finds the basis for Griggs' request to intervene and request for formal hearing are focused on questions related to Qwest's qualification to retain its CPCN. Regardless of Griggs' assertions, as well as the assertions of others, the Commission finds Qwest's CPCN is not within the issues of this proceeding, and that granting intervention and a hearing on that basis would both unduly broaden the issues and delay this proceeding.

Order

The Commission Orders:

1. Griggs County Telephone Company's request for intervention is denied.
2. Griggs County Telephone Company's request for a formal hearing is denied.

3. Qwest Corporation's relinquishment of its December 17, 1997, designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier is permitted for the Leonard Exchange in North Dakota effective February 18, 2026.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  Sheri Haugen-Hoffart Commissioner |  Randy Christmann Chair |  Jill Kringstad Commissioner |
|---|---|---|

PLACE STICKER AT TOP OF ENVELOPE TO THE RIGHT

PU-25-233

SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION

- Complete items 1, 2, and 3.
- Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you.
- Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits.

1. Addressee Name and Address

Jason Topp
 Assistant General Counsel
 200 S. 5th St. Room 2200
 Minneapolis, MN 55402
 Cert. No. 9589 0710 5270 2708 2431 99
 Case No. U-25-233



9590 9402 9542 5121 0546 51

2. Article Number (Transfer from service label)

9589 0710 5270 2708 2431 99

COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY

A. Signature

X Agent Addressee

B. Received by (Printed Name) C. Date of Delivery

D. Is delivery address different from item 1? Yes
If YES, enter delivery address below: No

3. Service Type
- Adult Signature
 - Adult Signature Restricted Delivery
 - Certified Mail®
 - Certified Mail Restricted Delivery
 - Collect on Delivery
 - Collect on Delivery Restricted Delivery
 - Insured Mail
 - Insured Mail Restricted Delivery (over \$500)
 - Priority Mail Express®
 - Registered Mail™
 - Registered Mail Restricted Delivery
 - Signature Confirmation™
 - Signature Confirmation Restricted Delivery

Return Receipt Requested

Return Receipt Requested

PS Form 3811, July 2020 PSN 7530-02-000-9053

Domestic Return Receipt

PU-25-233
Public Service Commission
State of North Dakota

Official Mail 600 E BOULEVARD AVE DEPT 408
BISMARCK ND 58505-0480

CERTIFIED MAIL®

BISMARCK ND 585



9589 0710 5270 2708 2431 99



US POSTAGE
ZIP 58505 \$010.44⁰
02 4W
0000378429 FEB 19 2026

POSTAGE REQUESTED

Return Receipt Requested

Return Receipt Requested

UTF
208

RECEIVED

FEB 27 2026

NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Jason Topp
Assistant General Counsel
200 S. 5th St. Room 2200
Minneapolis, MN 55402

NIXIE 553 FE 1 0002/24/26

RETURN TO SENDER
NOT DELIVERABLE AS ADDRESSED
UNABLE TO FORWARD

BC: 58505048099 *1628-06503-20-16

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