

CHAPTER 21. INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENTS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Subchapter D. DISPUTE RESOLUTION.

§21.101. Approval of Amendments to Existing Interconnection Agreements.

- (a) **Application.** Any amendments, including modifications, to a previously approved interconnection agreement must be submitted to the commission for review and approval. Any one party to the agreement may file the application for approval of the amendments, provided that all parties to the agreement seek approval. The parties requesting approval must file a copy with the commission serve a copy on each of the other parties to the agreement as applicable. An application for approval of an amended agreement must include:
- (1) a complete and unredacted copy of the amended portions of the interconnection agreement, along with any other relevant portions to place the amendments in context;
 - (2) the name, address, telephone number, facsimile number, and email address of each of the parties to the agreement;
 - (3) an affidavit by each of the signatory parties explaining how the agreement is consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity, including all relevant requirements of state law; and
 - (4) to the extent that an amendment to previously approved interconnection agreement establishes a new or different price for an unbundled network element, combination of unbundled network elements, or resold service, a verified statement that all certificated carriers will be notified of such price either through web posting, mass mailing or electronic mail within ten days of the date the ruling becomes final.
- (b) **Notice.** The commission may require the parties to the agreement to provide reasonable notice of the filing of the agreement. The commission may require publication of the notice in addition to direct notice to affected persons. At the commission's discretion, direct notice may be provided by electronic mail or a website, provided all affected persons are made aware of the website. The commission will determine the appropriate scope and wording of the notice to be provided.
- (c) **Proceeding.**
- (1) **Administrative review.** The commission delegates its authority to the presiding officer to administratively approve or deny any interconnection agreement amendments. Notice of approval or denial will be issued within 15 days of the filing of the application. If a notice of denial is filed, the notice of denial without prejudice will include written findings indicating any deficiencies in the agreement. Amendments to interconnection agreements will be administratively reviewed by the presiding officer unless the presiding officer determines that a formal review of the amendments is appropriate in accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection. At the presiding officer's discretion, approval can be referred directly to the commission should the presiding officer determine that there is an issue that is more appropriately decided by the commission that does not necessarily require formal resolution.
 - (2) **Formal resolution.** If the presiding officer determines that an application for approval of an amendment to an interconnection agreement cannot be administratively approved, a formal review may be conducted and may require formal resolution under §21.95 of this title (relating to Compulsory Arbitration) or §21.125 of this title (relating to Formal Dispute Resolution Proceeding), as appropriate.
- (d) **Comments.** An interested person may file comments on the amended agreement by filing the comments with the commission's filing clerk and serving a copy of the comments on each party to the agreement within five days of the filing of the application. The comments must include the following information:
- (1) a detailed statement of the person's interests in the agreement, including a description of how approval of the agreement may adversely affect those interests;

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- (2) specific allegations that the agreement, or some portion thereof:
 - (A) discriminates against a telecommunications carrier that is not a party to the agreement; or
 - (B) is not consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity; or
 - (C) is not consistent with other requirements of state law; and
 - (3) the specific facts upon which the allegations are based.
- (e) **Issues.** In any proceeding conducted by the commission in accordance with subsection (c)(2) of this section, the commission will consider only evidence and argument concerning whether the agreement, or some portion thereof:
- (1) discriminates against a telecommunications carrier that is not a party to the agreement; or
 - (2) is not consistent with the public interest, convenience, and necessity; or
 - (3) is not consistent with other requirements of state law.
- (f) **Authority of presiding officer.** The presiding officer has broad discretion in conducting the proceeding, including the authority given to a presiding officer under §22.202 of this title (relating to Presiding Officer) and §21.95 of this title. Discovery is governed by §21.95(k) of this title. In addition, the presiding officer has broad discretion to ask clarifying questions and to direct a party or a witness to provide information, at any time during the proceeding, as set out in §21.95(q) of this title.
- (g) **Effective date.** Any amendment to an existing interconnection agreement is effective upon issuance by the commission of a notice of approval.
- (h) **Formal approval.** When an amendment to an existing interconnection agreement is subject to the formal review process as proposed in subsection (c) of this section, the commission will issue its final decision on the amendment within 90 days following the filing of the application. The commission may reject, approve, or modify the amendment, or the commission may remand the agreement to the presiding officer for further proceedings. If the commission rejects the amendment, the final decision will include written findings indicating any deficiencies in the amendment.
- (i) **Filing of agreement.** If the presiding officer approves the amendments to the agreement, the parties to the agreement must file a copy of the complete amended interconnection agreement with the commission's filing clerk within ten working days of the presiding officer's decision. The filed copy must be clearly marked with the control number assigned to the proceeding and the language "Amended interconnection agreement as approved (or modified and approved) on (insert date)." Within 15 working days of the approval of the agreement, the incumbent local exchange company (ILEC) must post notice of the approved interconnection agreement on its website in a separate, easily identifiable area of the website. The ILEC website must provide a complete list of approved interconnection agreements, listed alphabetically by carrier, including docket numbers and effective dates. In addition, the ILEC website must provide a direct link to the commission's website.