

**BEFORE THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

**September 22, 2025**

**IN RE:**

**PETITION FOR APPLICATION OF GLOBAL  
CONNECTION INC. OF AMERICA FOR  
DESIGNATION AS A WIRELINE ELIGIBLE  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER IN THE  
STATE OF TENNESSEE**

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**DOCKET NO.  
16-00080**

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**ORDER APPROVING REQUEST TO RELINQUISH  
DESIGNATION AS AN ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER**

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This matter came before Vice Chairman John Hie, Commissioner Herbert H. Hilliard, Commissioner Robin L. Morrison, Commissioner Kenneth C. Hill, and Commissioner David Crowell of the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (the “Commission” or “TPUC”), the voting panel assigned to this docket, during a regularly scheduled Commission Conference held on September 15, 2025. The panel convened to consider a request to cancel the Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (“ETC”) designation filed by Global Connection Inc. of America (“Global Connection” or “Company”) on November 26, 2019.

**I. BACKGROUND AND REQUEST TO CANCEL**

The Commission’s predecessor, the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (“TRA”), granted authority to Global Connection, then known as Global Connection Inc. of Tennessee, to provide operator services and/or resell telecommunications services on September 14, 1999, in Docket No. 99-00624.<sup>1</sup> The TRA granted a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (“CCN”) to Global Connection to provide competing local exchange telecommunications services on September 4, 2002,

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<sup>1</sup> *In re: Application of Global Connection Inc. of Tennessee for Authority to Provide Resell Telecommunications Services in Tennessee*, Docket No. 99-00624, *Order and Application* (March 26, 2013).

in Docket No. 02-00567.<sup>2</sup> The Company was designated as a wireline ETC on September 12, 2016, in Docket No. 16-00080.<sup>3</sup> This designation was for the limited purpose of receiving federal universal service low-income support to serve its Tennessee Lifeline customers and to submit requests for Lifeline credits directly to the Universal Service Administrative Company (“USAC”). The Company changed its name to Global Connection Inc. of America on September 21, 2009, in Docket No. 09-00092.<sup>4</sup>

On November 26, 2019, the Commission received a “Global Connection Inc. of America Notice of Service Discontinuance; Request to Cancel Telecommunications Authority, and to Relinquish Wireline Eligible Telecommunications Designation” (“Request to Cancel”).<sup>5</sup> The Request to Cancel provided notice of the Company’s intent to discontinue providing local exchange services in Tennessee beginning on February 27, 2020, and requested to cancel its reseller CCN, cancel its CCN to provide competing local exchange services, and to relinquish its wireline ETC designation. The Company stated its discontinuation of service would have minimal effect, as there were no more than 52 customers in the state.<sup>6</sup> Those customers were sent written notice on November 25, 2019, notifying them that the Company would cease providing prepaid local exchange and interexchange services beginning on February 27, 2020. The timing of the disconnects was aligned with the end of each customer’s prepaid monthly service period, and each customer was provided with notice of the specific date of their discontinuance. As a result, all customers were provided with at least 60 days’ notice of the proposed discontinuance.<sup>7</sup> Global Connection requested that the Commission cancel its

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<sup>2</sup> *In re: Application of Global Connection Inc. of Tennessee for a CCN*, Docket No. 02-00567, *Initial Order Granting CCN* (September 4, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> *Order Designating Global Connection Inc. as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier* (October 5, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> *In re: Petition of Global Connection Inc. of Tennessee to Change its Name to Global Connection of America*, Docket No. 09-00092, *Order Granting Approval of Name Change* (September 30, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Request to Cancel (November 26, 2019). *See also in re: Application of Global Connection Inc. of Tennessee for a CCN*, Docket No. 02-00567, Request to Cancel (November 27, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Request to Cancel, p. 1 (November 26, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 2.

wireline telecommunications authority on or after March 22, 2020.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the Company requested to relinquish its wireline ETC designation since it was no longer a provider of wireline telecommunications services. Global Connection asserted that other wireline ETCs serve within the Company’s designated area.

As a result of the Request to Cancel, the Commission granted cancellation of the CCN to provide resold telecommunications services in Docket No. 99-00624,<sup>9</sup> and the cancellation of the CCN to provide competing local exchange telecommunications services in Docket No. 02-00567<sup>10</sup> at the September 14, 2020, Commission Conference. The Company’s request to relinquish its ETC designation in this docket was not placed on the September 14, 2020, Commission Conference Agenda for consideration. Commission Staff discovered that the Commission had not considered the request to relinquish the ETC designation when the Company requested a copy of the order approving the relinquishment.<sup>11</sup>

## **II. STANDARD FOR COMMISSION APPROVAL**

Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) Rule 54.205 permits the relinquishment of ETC designation. The version of the rule in effect on the date of Global Connection’s Request to Cancel states:

- (a) A state commission shall permit an eligible telecommunications carrier to relinquish its designation as such a carrier in any area served by more than one eligible telecommunications carrier. An eligible telecommunications carrier that seeks to relinquish its eligible telecommunications carrier designation for an area served by more than one eligible telecommunications carrier shall give advance notice to the state commission of such relinquishment.

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<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>9</sup> *In re: Application of Global Connection Inc. of Tennessee for Authority to Provide Resell Telecommunications Services in Tennessee*, Docket No. 99-00624, *Order Granting Cancellation of Authority to Provide Resold Telecommunications Services* (October 21, 2020).

<sup>10</sup> *In re: Application of Global Connection Inc. of Tennessee for a CCN*, Docket No. 02-00567, *Order Granting Cancellation of Authority to Provide Resold Telecommunications Services* (October 21, 2020).

<sup>11</sup> Email Correspondence Between Aaron Conklin, Senior Counsel, and Tina Allen, Compliance Director, Telecom Service Bureau, Re Wireline ETC Relinquishment (September 4, 2025).

(b) 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.<sup>12</sup>

Under the FCC rules, the Commission is required to grant a request to relinquish a designation as an ETC where qualifying conditions are met. First, the area served by the ETC designee requesting relinquishment must be served by more than one ETC. Second, the ETC designee must provide notice to its customers, ensuring that all customers will continue to be served.

### **III. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The panel considered the Request to Cancel during a regularly scheduled Commission Conference held on September 15, 2025. Global Connection holds an ETC designation that extends to the entire state of Tennessee. The panel determined that multiple wireline telecommunications service providers have an ETC designation with the same service area. Therefore, the Company satisfies the first eligibility requirement to relinquish its ETC designation under the FCC Rule.

In addition, as the Company has not been providing wireline services and has had no customers in the state since 2020, the panel found that it is not necessary for the Commission to require the Company to ensure that the customers of Global Connection will continue to be served. The Company did provide notice to its customers 60 days prior to its cessation of services, providing its Lifeline customers with the opportunity to be served by other ETCs serving the area. Therefore,

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<sup>12</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 54.205 (2019).

the panel found that Global Connection has satisfied all FCC requirements to relinquish its ETC designation within the state of Tennessee.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:**

1. The Request to Relinquish its designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier filed by Global Connection Inc. of America is approved.
2. Any person aggrieved by the Commission's decision in this matter may file a Petition for Reconsideration with the Commission within fifteen days from the date of this Order.
3. Any person aggrieved by the Commission's decision in this matter has the right to judicial review by filing a Petition for Review in the Tennessee Court of Appeals, Middle Section, within sixty days from the date of this Order.

**FOR THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:**

**Vice Chairman John Hie,  
Commissioner Herbert H. Hilliard,  
Commissioner Robin L. Morrison,  
Commissioner Kenneth C. Hill, and  
Commissioner David Crowell concurred.**

None dissented.

**ATTEST:**



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**Earl R. Taylor, Executive Director**