

BEFORE THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

August 25, 2026

IN RE:	)	DOCKET NO.
	)	26-00041
PETITION OF CITIZENS TELECOMMUNICATIONS	)	
COMPANY OF TENNESSEE, LLC FOR AN ORDER	)	COMPANY ID:
CONFIRMING RELINQUISHMENT OF ITS ELIGIBLE	)	129025
TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER DESIGNATION	)	

AMENDED ORDER GRANTING CANCELLATION OF ETC DESIGNATION

This Amended Order supersedes and replaces the prior order entered on July 16, 2026.

This matter came before Chairman David F. Jones, Vice Chairman John A. Hie, Commissioner Herbert H. Hilliard, Commissioner Robin L. Morrison, and Commissioner Kenneth C. Hill of the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (the “Commission” or “TPUC”), the voting panel assigned to this docket, during a regularly scheduled Commission Conference on June 1, 2026. The panel convened to consider the request filed on May 19, 2026, by Citizens Telecommunications Company of Tennessee, LLC d/b/a Frontier (“Frontier” or “Company”) to relinquish its designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (“ETC”).

I. BACKGROUND AND REQUEST TO RELINQUISH

Frontier is an incumbent local exchange carrier (“ILEC”) in Tennessee.¹ The Company was designated a wireline eligible telecommunications carrier (“ETC”) on December 17, 1997, in Docket No. 97-00888.² On May 19, 2026, the Company filed a petition to relinquish its wireline ETC designation, effective September 1, 2026. In its *Petition*, Frontier states that it has not been

¹ *Petition of Citizens Telecommunications Company of Tennessee L.L.C. for an Order Confirming Relinquishment of its Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Designation*, p. 1 (May 19, 2026) (“*Petition*”).

² *Id.* at 2. See also *Order Designating Eligible Telecommunications Carriers Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 214(e), the Telecommunications Act of 1996, section 254(c) and FCC Order 97-157*, Docket No. 97-00888 (December 17, 1997).

eligible to receive high-cost universal support since December 2021, when the FCC's Connect America Fund ended and was replaced by the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund ("RDOF"). RDOF-eligible census blocks were awarded to other carriers in the 2020 RDOF auction.

The Company stated that its relinquishment of the ETC designation would have minimal effect, as it has only 51 Lifeline customers in the state, representing a 75% decline from five years prior.³ These customers will receive written notice that the Company will cease providing the Lifeline discount, along with information on how to obtain a list of carriers that provide Lifeline services in the area. Further, Frontier asserted that other wireline ETCs serve within the Company's designated area and provided a list of the carriers with statewide ETC designations and carriers with ETC designations in Frontier wire centers.⁴

II. STANDARD FOR COMMISSION APPROVAL

Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") Rule 54.205 permits the relinquishment of ETC designation:

(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.

(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

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.* at 4.

approves such relinquishment under this section, within which such purchase or construction shall be completed.⁵

Under the FCC rules, the Commission must grant a request to relinquish an ETC designation when the 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 Frontier's request to relinquish its ETC designation during the regularly scheduled Commission Conference on June 1, 2026. Frontier's ETC designation covers the 19 wire centers within the State of Tennessee listed in its Petition. The panel determined that multiple wireline telecommunications service providers also hold ETC designations within the Frontier ETC-designated wire centers or statewide. Therefore, the Company is eligible to relinquish its ETC designation under the FCC Rule. In addition, the Company's proposed customer notifications provide sufficient information to ensure that Frontier's customers will continue to be served. Finally, the Company is in good standing and current on inspection fees owed to the Commission. Accordingly, the panel found that Frontier meets the requirements to relinquish its ETC designation. After careful consideration of the entire record in this matter, the panel voted unanimously to grant the Company's request to cancel its ETC.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

1. This Amended Order, with expanded reasoning, replaces the July 16, 2026 Order entirely. All previous versions are vacated and replaced.
2. Citizens Telecommunications Company of Tennessee, LLC d/b/a Frontier's Request to Relinquish its designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier is approved.

⁵ 47 C.F.R. § 54.205 (2019).

3. Any person aggrieved by the Commission's decision in this matter may file a Petition for Reconsideration with the Commission within 15 days from the date of this Order.

4. 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 60 days from the date of this Order.

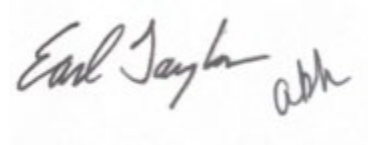
FOR THE TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:

Commission Panel Vote

The Commission panel has adopted the foregoing order, which supersedes the previous order issued in this matter. All members present and voting concurred, except Commissioner Herbert H. Hilliard, who was absent.

David F. Jones, Chairman
John A. Hie, Vice Chairman
Robin L. Morrison, Commissioner
Kenneth C. Hill, Commissioner

Order Issued and Attested By:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Earl Taylor" followed by a smaller, less legible signature or initials.

Earl R. Taylor, Executive Director