



1000 University Ave., W. Suite 222  
Saint Paul, MN 55104  
651-330-8062 (Main)  
www.mendozalawoffice.com

By: Anthony S. Mendoza, Esq.  
Direct Dial: 651-340-8884  
tony@mendozalawoffice.com  
and  
Jessica D. Schatz

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## **MPUC APPROVES SETTLEMENT REGARDING FRONTIER'S TELEPHONE SERVICE QUALITY**

Between January 2017 and January 2018, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's Consumer Affairs Office received a large volume of complaints related to the service quality, customer service, and billing practices of Frontier Communications. In April 2018, the Commission opened a formal investigation of Frontier and ordered the Department of Commerce to file a report on the public hearings. The Department filed its investigative report in January 2019, alleging numerous violations of Minnesota's state telecommunications regulatory statutes. Frontier vigorously disputed many of these allegations. In February 2019, Frontier, the Department, and the Minnesota Office of the Attorney General (OAG) entered mediated settlement negotiations. On August 2, 2019 the parties notified the Commission that they had reached a settlement and requested the Commission's approval.

The settlement establishes specific customer remedies for telephone service issues and detailed a system under which Frontier must report on its telephone service quality for a minimum of two years. The settlement contains three primary commitments from Frontier details regarding which are set forth in the settlement agreement:

1. Offering customer monetary remedies for certain past and future telephone service quality problems;
2. Improving service quality, customer service, and billing practices; and
3. Reporting requirements that will monitor Frontier's compliance with the Settlement.

There were no penalties for Frontier issued in the settlement.

Frontier's obligations in the settlement will expire in two years, or until Frontier meets substantial compliance requirements for service quality metrics set forth in the settlement. The settlement explicitly excludes discussion or resolution of issues related to internet services, which were also addressed in the Department's investigative report.

In October 2019, the Commission held a hearing regarding the settlement. At the hearing, the Department and Frontier assured the Commission the settlement would improve Frontier's telephone service within Minnesota and prevent future issues. Although the Commission expressed its discontent with Frontier's internet service, the Commission acknowledged it has no jurisdiction over internet services. The Commission added several modifications to the settlement that clarified its language and reiterated the Commission's enforcement role regarding the settlement. The Commission unanimously voted to approve the settlement as modified during hearing. A copy of the full settlement can be found by clicking this [link](#). The settlement became official when the Commission issued its Order approving the settlement with modifications on January 22, 2020. A copy of the Order can be accessed by clicking this [link](#).

The Department of Commerce has told the Commission that it will continue investigating Frontier's internet service and may refer complaints to regulatory authorities that do have jurisdiction over internet services. And on December 19, 2019, the Department opened a new [investigation](#) focused on Frontier's billing and customer service practices.