BEFORE THE IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF TRUCONNECT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.'S APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION AS AN ELIGIBLE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER IN THE STATE OF IDAHO	))))))	**CASE NO. TCC-T-24-01** **ORDER NO. 37175**

On March 4, 2024, TruConnect Communications, Inc. ("TCC") applied to the Idaho Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") for designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier ("ETC") in the State of Idaho ("Application"). The Company requested designation as an ETC for the sole purpose of providing Lifeline services. Application at 1. The Company asked that it be allowed to participate and receive reimbursement from the Idaho Telephone Service Assistance Program ("ITSAP") accordingly. *Id.*

On June 20, 2024, the Commission issued a Notice of Application and set deadlines for public comments and the Company's reply. Order No. 36227. The Company submitted materials supplementing its Application on July 9, 2024.

On July 11, 2024, Staff submitted comments arguing that the Company's request for ETC status should be denied. Among other things, Staff asserted that the Company failed to meet the necessary requirements for an ETC to remain functional in an emergency and promote the public interest. Staff Comments at 10.

On July 18, 2024, the Company submitted reply comments, arguing that the items of non-compliance referred to by Staff were not actually requirements for obtaining ETC status. TCC Reply at 1. Therefore, the Company contended it should not be denied ETC status for not submitting these non-mandatory items. *Id.* After reviewing the reply comments, Staff recommended that the Commission issue a Notice of Supplemental Comment and Reply Deadlines to allow the parties to submit additional documentation and analysis for consideration by the Commission. The Commission adopted Staff's recommendation and ordered a supplemental comment and reply period. Order No. 36284.

On August 15, 2024, the Company moved to stay this case for six months. The Company explained that this would give its corporate parent time to decide on the future of TCC and Sage Telecom Communications, LLC dba TruConnect ("Sage")—an affiliate telephone company operating in Idaho. Motion to Stay at 1. Staff did not oppose this request. On August 16, 2024, Staff filed supplemental comments. In these comments, Staff explained that they believed TCC's corporate parent did not intend for both TCC and Sage to provide the same services in the same area while operating under separate ETC designations. Staff Supplemental Comments at 2. Instead, the companies were to have different owners or be sufficiently distinct to justify separate designations. *Id.* Because the Company had yet to decide which path to take, Staff recommended that the Commission stay the case for up to six months so the Company could finalize its plan. *Id.* at 3.

On October 4, 2024, the Commission stayed this case for six months to give the Company time to determine its path forward. Order No. 36344.

On June 11, 2025, the Commission issued a Notice of Second Supplemental Comment and Reply Deadlines, establishing deadlines for Staff and the Company to address the impact of a certification Sage would file regarding its plans in relation to TCC's application for ETC designation. Order No. 36634.

On May 30, 2025, prior to the issuance of Order No. 36634, a representative of TCC's corporate parent filed a document certifying that, within one year of TCC obtaining ETC status in Idaho, it would either 1) enter an agreement to sell Sage; or 2) Sage will begin offering at least one different service plan than TCC. Certification at 1. Alternatively, if neither occurred, it would voluntarily give up Sage's ETC status without prejudice. *Id.* at 2. Subsequently, Staff filed supplemental comments to which the Company replied on June 25, 2025, and June 26, 2025, respectively.

On August 22, 2025, the Commission issued Order No. 36738 granting TCC a limited designation as an ETC in the State of Idaho and directing Sage to submit quarterly compliance filings for the next 12 months detailing the status of the customer transfer and the plans for Sage. TCC submitted compliance filings on April 24, 2026, and July 29, 2026. Order No. 36738 at 7.

On August 18, 2026, TCC filed a Motion for Extension of Time ("Motion"), requesting an additional six months, until February 22, 2027, for its parent company to take the actions directed in Order No. 36738. Motion at 1. TCC explained that it was currently working with Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") Staff in the Wireline Competition Bureau regarding options to transfer Sage's Lifeline customers to TCC. *Id.* at 2. TCC also reported that the number of Lifeline customers enrolled with Sage had declined in the last 12 months from over 700 to 358, while the number of Lifeline customers enrolled with TCC had increased. *Id.* TCC believed that a six-month extension would enable communications with the FCC to continue while not causing harm to TCC or Sage customers. *Id.*

At the Commission's Decision Meeting on September 3, 2026, Commission Staff presented a Decision Memorandum recommending the Commission grant TCC's request for a six-month extension and direct TCC to submit an additional compliance filing in three months updating Staff and the Commission on the status of the customer transfer and the plans for Sage.

Based on our review of the record, the Commission now issues this Order granting TCC's request for an extension and directing TCC to submit an additional compliance filing updating Staff and the Commission on the status of the customer transfer and the plans for Sage.

COMMISSION FINDINGS AND DECISION

The Commission has authority under federal and state law to grant ETC designation to a telecommunications carrier. 47 U.S.C. § 214(e); *Idaho Code* §§ 62-610D and 62-615(1). The Commission has reviewed TCC's Motion for an extension of time for its parent company to take the actions directed in Order No. 36738. TCC represents that it is currently working with FCC Staff in the Wireline Competition Bureau regarding options for transferring Sage's Lifeline customers to TCC. The Commission finds that granting a six-month extension is reasonable under the circumstances.

Accordingly, the Commission grants TCC an extension of six months from the service date of this Order to take the actions directed in Order No. 36738. Additionally, the Commission directs TCC to submit a compliance report within three months of the service date of this Order. The report shall provide Staff and the Commission with an update regarding the status of the customer transfer and TCC's plans for Sage.

The Commission finds that the extension granted herein is conditioned upon TCC's continued efforts toward compliance with Order No. 36738. If TCC fails to submit the required compliance filing or discontinues its efforts toward compliance with Order No. 36738, the Commission directs Staff to re-evaluate the matter at that time and make a recommendation to the Commission regarding whether revocation of TCC's ETC designation is warranted.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Company's request for a six-month extension is granted.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Company shall file a report as a compliance filing within three months of the service date of this Order. The report shall update Staff and the Commission on the status of the customer transfer and the plans for Sage

THIS IS AN INTERLOCUTORY ORDER rather than a final and appealable Order of the Commission. While the Commission may review, stay, or clarify an interlocutory order, the period of reconsideration will not begin until the Final Order is issued.

DONE by Order of the Idaho Public Utilities Commission at Boise, Idaho this 22nd day of September 2026.

EDWARD LODGE, PRESIDENT

JOHN R. HAMMOND JR., COMMISSIONER

DAYN HARDIE, COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

Monica Barrios-Sanchez
Commission Secretary

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