

WEIKLE & Co.

January 28, 2018

The Honorable Phil Berger, Senate President Pro Tempore
The Honorable Tim Moore, House Speaker
North Carolina General Assembly
c/o Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations
Legislative Office Building
Raleigh, NC 27603

Filed via email

Re: Ellerbe Telephone Company Annual Report to the Joint Legislative
Commission on Governmental Operations

Dear President Berger and Speaker Moore:

On behalf of Ellerbe Telephone Company, this filing is being made to comply with a requirement found in North Carolina General Statute § 62-133.5(k).

If there are any questions, I can be reached at 704.782.7738 or 704.699.9451 (cell).

Sincerely,

/s/ Jerry Weikle

Jerry Weikle
Consultant to Ellerbe Telephone Company

Attachment

cc: North Carolina Utilities Commission (Docket No. P-21 Sub 75)

Ellerbe Telephone Company

**Annual Report to the Joint Legislative Commission on
Governmental Operations**

January 28, 2018

Ellerbe Telephone Company 2017 Annual Report to the General Assembly

Ellerbe Telephone Company (Ellerbe) is an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC) that provides telecommunications services in its franchised area within Richmond County, NC. Ellerbe is regulated by the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC).

Ellerbe elected a form of deregulation as allowed by North Carolina General Statute § 62-133.5(h) effective on January 1, 2014. This filing is made in response to North Carolina General Statute § 62-133.5(k) which requires an annual report that includes the following:

- (1) An analysis of telecommunications competition by the local exchange company or competing local provider, including access line gain or loss and the impact on consumer choices from the date the local exchange company makes its election to be subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section.*
- (2) An analysis of service quality based on customer satisfaction studies from the date the local exchange company makes its election to be subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section.*
- (3) An analysis of the level of local exchange rates from the date the local exchange company makes its election to be subject to alternative regulation under the terms of subsection (h) or (m) of this section.*

Telecommunications Competition Analysis

Competition in the telecommunications is strong across the state. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) publishes periodic reports on the status of local telephone competition. The most recent report was published in April 2017. “This report summarizes the information collected about telephone services as of June 30, 2016. It demonstrates continued growth in subscribership to interconnected VoIP and mobile voice services and continued decline in subscribership to traditional wired telephone services.”¹ The FCC’s report states that 49% of wired telephone service in North Carolina is provided by competitors to ILECs.² The FCC’s report also states that there were 9,828,000 wireless connections in North Carolina compared to 3,628,000 wired connections (served by both ILECs and competitors).³

Ellerbe experienced competition and a decline in the number of customers. Ellerbe started the year with 1,241 access lines and ended the year with 1,125 access lines. This was a loss of 9.3% of its access lines.

¹ “Voice Telephone Services: Status as of June 30, 2016” Federal Communications Commission Industry Analysis and Technology Division Wireline Competition Bureau April 2017, at page 1.

² Id., at Supplemental Table 1. Voice Subscriptions (in Thousands) – North Carolina.

³ Id.

Service Quality Analysis

Ellerbe collects a variety of service quality statistics to monitor how it is serving customers. NCUC Rule R9-8 has service quality objectives in place for some local telecommunications service companies. Although Ellerbe is exempt from these rules, many of these objectives were monitored and did meet requirements during 2017.

Since Ellerbe is regulated by the NCUC, customers have the opportunity to file complaints with the NCUC. Based on company records there were no customer complaints filed with the NCUC during 2017.

Local Exchange Rate Analysis

Under North Carolina General Statute § 62-133.5(h), Ellerbe is allowed to increase the rate for standalone basic residential service by no more than the change in inflation. Inflation is measured for this purpose as the change in the Gross Domestic Product Pricing Index. Ellerbe opted not to change the rate for standalone basic residential service during 2017.