

# STATE OF WISCONSIN

99 PSC

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## JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

May 13, 1999

Ms. Ave M. Bie, Chairperson  
Public Service Commission  
610 N. Whitney Way  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53705-2729

Dear Chairperson Bie:

Section 196.218(5r) of the statutes requires the Public Service Commission to annually submit a report on the universal service fund to the Legislature's Joint Committee on Information Policy.

That reporting requirement was created as part of 1993 Act 496. The purpose of the report was to provide the Legislature with an annual review of the status of universal telecommunications service in the state. In particular, the Act directed that this annual report include information on all of the following: (a) the affordability of and accessibility to a basic set of essential telecommunications services and of advanced service capabilities throughout the state; (b) the affordability of and accessibility to high-quality education, library and health care information services; (c) financial assistance provided under the universal service fund; and (d) an assessment of how successful these USF and other investments have been.

Although required to do so by statute, the Public Service Commission has never filed the required report.

The report should be of considerable assistance to the Legislature in assessing the USF programs. In particular, this report presumably would have been helpful to this Committee in the course of reviewing the proposed PSC budget with regard to the expenditure of monies from the USF. The Legislature will again face issues regarding the USF when the Commission submits its proposed rule revisions for the USF. More notably, the action taken by the Finance Committee to

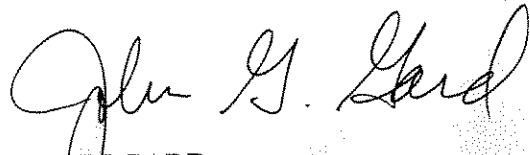
place the second year of USF funding in the Committee's SEG appropriation for release after a PSC expenditure plan is submitted makes it imperative that the PSC submit a report in a timely fashion. Further, the Commission should take the steps necessary so that in the future it meets the statutory directive for submittal of this report annually.

We expect that the report will be submitted by July 1, 1999. We request that copies of that report be sent to members of this Committee at the same time that they are provided to the Joint Committee on Information Policy.

Sincerely,



BRIAN BURKE  
Senate Chair



JOHN GARD  
Assembly Chair

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cc: Members, Joint Committee on Finance  
Members, Joint Committee on Information Policy