

**Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Federal-State Joint Board on	)	CC Docket No. 96-45
Universal Service: Promoting	)	
Deployment and Subscribership in	)	
Unserved and Underserved Areas,	)	
Including Tribal and Insular Areas	)	

**Reply Comments of the  
Rural Utilities Service**

The Rural Utilities Service (RUS), a rural development agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, actively supports and promotes the universal availability of a broad range of telecommunications and information services in rural America.

RUS Clarification of Comments Submitted in This Matter by SkyBridge, L.L.C (SkyBridge) on December 17, 1999.

In the first paragraph of Section II, SkyBridge asserted the following:

- That most RUS companies have between 200 and 400 subscribers per exchange, and
- The RUS companies average per subscriber cost was \$6,000.

RUS has reviewed the most recent statistical information submitted by its borrowers, that for the year ending December 31, 1998, and found that their exchanges averaged 1,164 lines with a median value of 914. The average plant in service was \$3,010/line with a median of \$2,943. Average net plant was \$1,711/line with a median of \$1,595.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer reply comments in the matter of unserved and underserved areas.

Dated: January 19, 2000

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Rural Utilities Service