May 8, 2013

Ms. Barcy McNeal

Secretary, Docketing Division

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

180 East Broad Street

Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

Re: In the Matter of the Commission's Oversight Concerning the Ohio Small Local Exchange Carriers Association

 PUCO Case No. 97-414-TP-UNC

Dear Ms. McNeal:

On behalf of the members of the Ohio Telecom Association (“OTA”), please accept this letter in support of the Petition of the Ohio Small Local Exchange Carrier Association (“OSLECA”) to discontinue its operation through a merger into the Northwest Ohio Independent Telecommunications Association, Inc. (“NWOITA”). The OSLECA petition was filed on May 3, 2013 in Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (“PUCO”) Case No. 97-414-TP-UNC, *In the Matter of the Commission’s Oversight Concerning the Ohio Small Local Exchange Carrier Association*.

This request for merger approval is consistent with previous PUCO action in this matter. On February 12, 1997, the PUCO issued a Finding and Order in its access charge proceeding (Case No. 83-464-TP-COI) approving the creation of OSLECA and transferring responsibility to it from the Ohio Telecommunications Advisory Board (“OTAB”).

OSLECA’s merger into NWOITA will again provide the appropriate business framework to serve their customers who depend on rural telecommunications service in Ohio. Since 2008, NWOITA and its members have served to promote the business of telecommunications services, including broadband deployment, to their customers and to do so with reliable services at affordable prices. The PUCO’s approval of this merger, along with the transfer of the remaining OSLECA operating fund monies, will serve to benefit and continue this important telecommunications and economic development tool for rural Ohio.

Ohio’s small telephone companies, like all telecom providers, face an ever changing competitive environment. Throughout their regulatory heritage, they have lived within a system that allowed them to serve their customers with the latest communications services possible. Advances in new technology and a variety of evolutionary regulatory schemes challenge not only the companies, but their customers as well. With the PUCO’s approval of this request, NWOITA and its member companies will continue to serve as an important element in Ohio’s telecommunications infrastructure and economy.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Charles R. Moses

President

Ohio Telecom Association