

**PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-3265**

Joint Application of The United Telephone Company of Pennsylvania LLC d/b/a Embarq Pennsylvania and Embarq Communications, Inc. For Approval of the Indirect Transfer of Control To CenturyTel, Inc.

**Public Meeting: May 28, 2009
2070638-OSA
Docket No. A-2008-2076038**

STATEMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN TYRONE J. CHRISTY

Before us for disposition are the Exceptions and Reply Exceptions of the various parties to the Initial Decision in the above docket regarding the Joint Application of the United Telephone Company of Pennsylvania d/b/a/ Embarq Pennsylvania (Embarq PA) and Embarq Communications, Inc. (ECI) for an indirect transfer of control to CenturyTel, Inc. (CenturyTel). This proposed merger represents complicated issues fully litigated by the parties in the proceeding. I commend the parties, the Administrative Law Judge and Commission staff for their work in addressing the various issues involved in this complicated merger.

The proposed merger is being adopted today with conditions that benefit the competitive marketplace and Pennsylvania consumers. Although I support the merger approved today with conditions, I am not convinced that all of the merger savings have been captured for Pennsylvania ratepayers. I believe that the rate freeze currently in effect as a result of a previous settlement in 2005 could have been continued on a going-forward basis resulting in additional merger savings for Pennsylvania. In order for the rate freeze to be continued in accordance with Chapter 30, the companies and the parties would have to agree to some type of additional rate freeze beyond 2009. In not reaching an agreement on this issue, the parties have missed the opportunity to gain additional merger savings for Pennsylvania consumers.

DATE

TYRONE J. CHRISTY, VICE CHAIRMAN