

CWA Files Comments with FCC Opposing AT&T's Application to Discontinue Service

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, February 26, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Communications Workers of America (CWA) union has [filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission](#) (DA 25-101) opposing AT&T's application to discontinue landline telephone service in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin. CWA is calling on the FCC to counterbalance the company's focus on maximizing profits over the public interest.

AT&T's proposal would enable the telecommunications provider to exit 250,000 square miles of rural communities across 18 states, or fifty percent of AT&T's historic footprint. While AT&T would continue to provide service to more populated, profitable areas, the "mobile first" proposal would put rural communities last, with lower quality and less reliable connectivity options.

"While AT&T's corporate executives and investors are insulated from the impact of these cuts on the communities they serve, frontline workers bear the brunt of customers' frustration with poor service quality, long wait times, and other harms from understaffing and outsourcing of critical functions," wrote CWA President Claude Cummings Jr. in his comments filed with the FCC.

Ending service over AT&T's copper network without upgrading to fiber will leave communities with limited and inferior options. Fiber is sustainable, scalable, and renewable. It offers greater capacity, predictable performance, lower maintenance costs, and a longer technological lifetime than coaxial cable, satellite, and fixed wireless technologies. An engineering analysis of fixed wireless technologies by consulting firm CTC Technology and Energy concludes that "fiber represents the most fiscally prudent expenditure of public funds in most circumstances because of its longevity and technical advantages."

AT&T's abandonment of rural America leaves the government to shoulder the burden of providing affordable service to all residents. The industry-driven deregulation of communications services has allowed telecommunications companies to select their own service areas. In recent years, AT&T has allowed its rural network to deteriorate, focusing on deploying fiber in densely populated areas that can yield a high profit margin.

AT&T has prioritized shareholder returns over investment in its network and workforce. On the

same day the company announced plans to retire the “large majority” of its copper-based network by 2029, it also said that it expects to return over \$40 billion to shareholders over the next three years through stock buybacks and dividends. To fulfill its universal service mandate, CWA urged the FCC to push AT&T to invest in fiber deployment beyond what the company might otherwise choose to pursue.

CWA represents workers in telecommunications, media, technology, public service, manufacturing, airlines, video games, and other fields, including tens of thousands of workers at AT&T.

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