

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

IN RE: PETITION OF AIRVOICE WIRELESS,:
LLC d/b/a AIRTALK WIRELESS FOR :
DESIGNATION AS AN ELIGIBLE : **DOCKET NO. 5243**
TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER :
IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND :

ORDER

On March 25, 2022, AirVoice Wireless, LLC d/b/a Airtalk Wireless (Petitioner) filed with the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) a Petition for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) throughout its service area in the State of Rhode Island pursuant to 47 U.S.C. Section 214(e)¹ in order to provide discounted service to low-income customers and receive certain subsidies from the federal Universal Service Fund (petition).²

This pre-paid wireless service provides non-tribal Lifeline customers with 1,000 voice minutes, 500 text messages per month, and 4.5 gigabytes (GB) of data per month at a net cost of \$0.00 after the application of Lifeline support.³ Petitioner stated that it has been allowed ETC status in several other states. Petitioner also indicated that it will not be seeking high cost support.⁴ Petitioner will enroll customers using the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier and comply with all certification, verification, along with other waste

¹ A copy of the Petition, Notice soliciting comments, and the Division’s Memorandum can be found on the Commission’s website: <http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/5243page.html>. 47 U.S.C. 214(e) imposed statutory responsibility upon the Commission to certify telecommunications service providers as “eligible” to receive funds from the Federal Universal Service Fund.

² By separate decision, on April 11, 2022, the PUC Commission approved Petitioner’s application for registration to provide telecommunications service in Rhode Island. Order No. 24348 (Apr. 11, 2022); [http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/5246-AirVoice%20Wireless%20%20Ord24348%20\(4-12-22\).pdf](http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/5246-AirVoice%20Wireless%20%20Ord24348%20(4-12-22).pdf).

³ Pet. at Exhibit 5. Customers who participate in Petitioner’s Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) for broadband will receive unlimited talk and text with 15 GB of data (unlimited for tribal customers). Pet. at 20.

⁴ Pet. at 6.

and fraud prevention measures as required by the Federal Communications Commission.⁵ Petitioner asserted that approval of its petition would advance the public interest by increasing competition and access for customers which benefits would outweigh any additional costs on the federal Universal Service Fund.

On May 10, 2022, the Commission issued a Public Notice soliciting comments regarding the petition. No comments were received. On May 13, 2022, the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) submitted a memorandum. The Division had reviewed the application and had undertaken an independent review of Petitioner's affiliates' industry, consumer, financial and regulatory history. The Division found that the application satisfied the threshold regulatory criteria, and it recommended that the Commission grant the wireless ETC designation without the need for additional regulatory vetting at the state level.

At an Open Meeting held on May 19, 2022, the Commission approved the petition finding that the petition for ETC designation solely for the purpose of providing Lifeline service to qualifying Rhode Island customers to be proper, in compliance with the federal and state requirements, and in the public interest.

Accordingly, it is hereby

(24417) ORDERED:

AirVoice Wireless, LLC d/b/a AirTalk Wireless, is hereby designated as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier throughout its service area for receiving universal service support.

⁵ *Id.* at 20-23.

EFFECTIVE AT WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND ON MAY 19, 2022,
PURSUANT TO AN OPEN MEETING DECISION. WRITTEN ORDER ISSUED ON
JUNE 3, 2022.



PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Ronald T. Gerwatowski

Ronald T. Gerwatowski, Chairman

Abigail Anthony

Abigail Anthony, Commissioner

John C. Revens, Jr.

John C. Revens, Jr., Commissioner

NOTICE OF RIGHT OF APPEAL: Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-5-1, any person aggrieved by a decision or order of the PUC may, within seven days from the date of the order, petition the Supreme Court for a Writ of Certiorari to review the legality and reasonableness of the decision or order.