BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NOTICE OF STAFF RULE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

TO

ALL INTERESTED PERSONS

UNDOCKETED

IN RE: INITIATION OF RULEMAKING TO AMEND RULE 25-4.0665, F.A.C., LIFELINE SERVICE, AND TO REPEAL RULE 25-4.113, F.A.C., REFUSAL OR DISCONTINUANCE OF SERVICE BY COMPANY

ISSUED: January 6, 2015

NOTICE is hereby given that a staff rule development workshop will be held at the following time and place:

Wednesday, January 21, 2015, at 1:30 p.m.
Room 105, Gunter Building (Internal Affairs Room)
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

A copy of the draft rules and the agenda for the workshop are attached.

One or more Commissioners may be in attendance and participate in the workshop. The person to be contacted regarding this rule development is Rosanne Gervasi, Office of the General Counsel, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, (850) 413-6224, rgervasi@psc.state.fl.us.

If you wish to comment but cannot attend the workshop, please submit your comments by February 4, 2015, to: Rosanne Gervasi, Office of the General Counsel, Florida Public Service Commission, 2540 Shumard Oak Blvd., Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850 (850) 413-6224.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons requiring a special accommodation to participate at this workshop should contact the Office of Commission Clerk no later than five days prior to the workshop at 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard., Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, via 1-800-955-8770 (Voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD), Florida Relay Service.
By DIRECTION of the Florida Public Service Commission this 6th day of January, 2015.

CARLOTTA S. STAUFFER
Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(850) 413-6770
www.floridapsc.com

Copies furnished: A copy of this document is provided to the parties of record at the time of issuance and, if applicable, interested persons.
25-4.0665 Lifeline Assistance Plan Service.

(1) A subscriber is eligible for Lifeline assistance service if:

(a) The subscriber is a participant in one of the following federal assistance programs:

1. Medicaid;
2. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps;
3. Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
4. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Temporary Cash Assistance (Florida program);
5. “Section 8” Federal Public Housing Assistance;
6. Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program; or
7. The National School Lunch Program – Free Lunch; or

(b) The subscriber’s Local Exchange Company eligible telecommunications carrier has more than one million access lines and the subscriber’s household income is at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines.

(c) The subscriber’s Local Exchange Company eligible telecommunications carrier has less than one million access lines and, pursuant to Title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 54, Subpart E, Section 54.409 Consumer qualification for Lifeline, paragraph (a)(1), as amended June 28, 2012, the subscriber’s household income is at or below 135 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines.

(2) A subscriber living on federally recognized Tribal lands who does not satisfy the eligibility requirements for Lifeline assistance service in subsection (1) of this rule is nevertheless eligible for Lifeline assistance service if the subscriber receives benefits from one of the following Bureau of Indian Affairs programs:

(a) Tribal temporary assistance for needy families (TANF);
(b) National School Lunch NSL Program – Free Lunch; or

(c) Head Start.

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(3) When enrolling customers in the Lifeline assistance plan under paragraph (1)(a) of this rule, eligible telecommunications carriers shall accept Form PSC/TEL 157 (2/13), entitled “Application for Lifeline Assistance,” which is incorporated into this rule by reference and is available at: [hyperlink]. This form can also be accessed from the Commission’s website at: http://www.floridapsc.com/utilities/telecomm/lifeline/LifelinePDFs/ApplicationEnglish.pdf. Eligible telecommunications carriers with less than one million access lines are not required to enroll Lifeline applicants through the income eligibility test of 150 percent or less of the federal poverty income guidelines, but may do so voluntarily.

(4) Eligible telecommunications carriers shall enroll customers for Lifeline assistance who electronically submit Form PSC/TEL 158 (6/10), entitled “Lifeline Florida On-line Application for Recipients of Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps, or Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA),” which is incorporated into this rule by reference and is available at: [hyperlink]. This form can also be accessed from the Commission’s website at: https://secure.floridapsc.com/(S(15p1gzir11b5swvfi2c30tyd))/public/lifeline/lifelineapplicantn2.aspx. Applicants who presently participate in Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food Stamps, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Temporary Cash Assistance programs can complete Form PSC/TEL 158 electronically on-line. Eligible telecommunications carriers that charge an initial connection charge must offer Link-Up service to subscribers who are eligible for Lifeline service pursuant to this rule.

(5) Eligible telecommunications carriers must allow customers the option to submit Lifeline applications and supporting documentation via U.S. Mail or facsimile, and may allow applications and supporting documentation to be submitted electronically. When enrolling customers in the Lifeline service program under paragraph (1)(a) of this rule, eligible telecommunications carriers shall accept Form PSC/TEL 157 (2/13), entitled “Application for Lifeline Assistance,” which is incorporated into this rule by reference and is available at: [hyperlink]. This form can also be accessed from the Commission’s website at: http://www.floridapsc.com/utilities/telecomm/lifeline/LifelinePDFs/ApplicationEnglish.pdf. Eligible telecommunications carriers with less than one million access lines are not required to enroll Lifeline applicants through the income eligibility test of 150 percent or less of the federal poverty income guidelines, but may do so voluntarily.

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telecommunications carriers shall accept Form PSC/RAD 157 (6/10), entitled “Application for Link-Up Florida and Lifeline Assistance,” which is incorporated into this rule by reference and can be accessed from the Commission’s website at www.floridapsc.com, by selecting “Link-Up Florida and Lifeline,” then selecting “Need Discounted Phone Service?,” and then selecting “English Link-Up and Lifeline Certification Form” (also available in Spanish and Creole).

(6) Except as otherwise set forth in paragraph (6)(a)-(d) of this rule, eligible telecommunications carriers shall comply with subscriber eligibility determination and certification requirements contained in Title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 54, Subpart E, Sections 54.407 Reimbursement for offering Lifeline, 54.409 Consumer qualification for Lifeline, 54.410 Subscriber eligibility determination and certification, and 54.416 Annual certifications by eligible telecommunications carriers, as amended June 28, 2012, which are incorporated into this rule by reference and are available at: [hyperlink]. These rules can also be accessed from the U.S. Government Printing Office’s website at: http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=fadabe77a9cbe6d6ba1d63b6a946ea0a&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title47/47cfr54_main_02.tpl. A copy of the annual certification provided to the administrator shall be filed with the Commission. Exceptions to these requirements are as follow:

(a) Section 54.407(d), regarding obtaining valid certification and re-certification forms for subscribers;

(b) Section 54.410(b)(2)(ii), regarding receipt of subscriber certification forms in compliance with Section 54.410(d);

(c) Section 54.410(c)(2)(ii), regarding receipt of subscriber certification forms in compliance with Section 54.410(d); and

(d) Section 54.410(e), regarding providing copies of subscriber certification forms.

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Eligible telecommunications carriers shall enroll customers for Lifeline service who electronically submit Form PSC/RAD 158 (6/10), entitled “Lifeline and Link-Up Florida On-line Self Certification Form,” which is incorporated into this rule by reference and can be accessed from the Commission’s website at www.floridapsc.com, by selecting “Link Up Florida and Lifeline,” then selecting “Apply On-line.”

(7) All eligible telecommunications carriers shall participate in the Lifeline assistance plan Coordinated Enrollment Process. For purposes of this rule, the Lifeline assistance plan Coordinated Enrollment Process is an electronic interface between the Department of Children and Families, the Commission, and the eligible telecommunications carrier that allows low-income individuals to enroll in Lifeline following enrollment in a qualifying public assistance program.

(a) The Commission shall send an e-mail to the eligible telecommunications carrier informing the eligible telecommunications carrier that Lifeline assistance plan applications are available for retrieval for processing.

(b) The eligible telecommunications carrier shall enroll the subscriber in the Lifeline assistance plan as soon as practicable, but no later than 60 days from the receipt of the e-mail notification. Upon completion of initial enrollment, eligible telecommunications carriers that invoice their subscribers shall credit the subscriber’s bill for Lifeline assistance as of the date the eligible telecommunications carrier received the e-mail notification from the Commission.

(c) The eligible telecommunications carrier shall maintain a current e-mail address with the Commission, which the Commission will use to inform the eligible telecommunications carrier of the Commission’s Lifeline secure website address and that new Lifeline assistance plan applications are available for retrieval for processing.

(d) The eligible telecommunications carrier shall maintain with the Commission the names, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of one primary and one secondary company

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representative who will manage the user accounts on the Commission’s Lifeline secure website.

(e) Within 20 calendar days of receiving the Commission’s e-mail notification that the Lifeline assistance plan application is available for retrieval, the eligible telecommunications carrier shall provide a facsimile response to the Commission via the Commission’s dedicated Lifeline assistance facsimile telephone line at (850)717-0108, or an electronic response via the Commission’s Lifeline secure website, identifying the customer name, address, telephone number, and date of the application for:

1. Misdirected Lifeline assistance plan applications;
2. Applications for customers currently receiving Lifeline assistance; and
3. Rejected applicants, which shall include the reason(s) why the applicants were rejected.

In lieu of a facsimile or electronic submission, the eligible telecommunications carrier may file the information with the Office of Commission Clerk.

(f) Pursuant to Section 364.107(1), F.S., information filed by the eligible telecommunications carrier in accordance with paragraph (8)(e) of this rule is confidential and exempt from Section 119.07(1), F.S. However, the eligible telecommunications carrier may disclose such information consistent with the criteria in Section 364.107(3)(a), F.S. For purposes of this rule, the information filed by the eligible telecommunications carrier will be presumed necessary for disclosure to the Commission pursuant to the criteria in Section 364.107(3)(a)4., F.S.

For Lifeline applicants who do not use on-line enrollment or simplified certification enrollment, the eligible telecommunications carrier must accept Public Assistance eligibility determination letters, including those provided for food stamps, Medicaid, and public housing lease agreements, as proof of eligibility for Link-Up and Lifeline enrollment.

(8) An eligible telecommunications carrier shall not impose additional certification

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requirements on subscribers beyond those which are required by this rule or by Title 47, Code
of Federal Regulations, Part 54, Subpart E, Sections 54.409 Consumer qualification for
Lifeline, 54.410 Subscriber eligibility determination and certification, and 54.416 Annual
certifications by eligible telecommunications carriers, as amended June 28, 2012. Eligible
telecommunications carriers must allow customers the option to submit Link-Up or Lifeline
applications via U.S. Mail or facsimile, and may allow applications to be submitted
electronically. Eligible telecommunications carriers must also allow customers the option to
submit copies of supporting documents via U.S. Mail or facsimile.

(9) If the Office of Public Counsel certifies a subscriber eligible to receive Lifeline assistance
under the income test set forth in Section 364.10(3)(a), F.S., an eligible telecommunications
carrier shall not impose any additional certification requirements on the subscriber. Eligible
telecommunications carriers shall only require a customer to provide the last four digits of the
customer’s social security number for application for Lifeline and Link-Up service and to
verify continued eligibility for the programs as part of the annual verification process.

(10) An eligible telecommunications carrier must provide written notice to a customer within
30 days of receipt of the application providing the reason for a rejected Lifeline application
and the contact information for the customer to obtain information regarding the application
denial. All eligible telecommunications carriers shall participate in the Lifeline service
Automatic Enrollment Process. For purposes of this rule, the Lifeline service Automatic
Enrollment Process is an electronic interface between the Department of Children and Family
Services, the Commission, and the eligible telecommunications carrier that allows low-income
individuals to automatically enroll in Lifeline following enrollment in a qualifying public
assistance program.

(a) The Commission shall send an e-mail to the eligible telecommunications carrier informing
the eligible telecommunications carrier that Lifeline service applications are available for
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retrieval for processing.

(b) The eligible telecommunications carrier shall enroll the subscriber in the Lifeline service program as soon as practicable, but no later than 60 days from the receipt of the e-mail notification. Upon completion of initial enrollment, the eligible telecommunications carrier shall credit the subscriber’s bill for Lifeline service as of the date the eligible telecommunications carrier received the e-mail notification from the Commission.

(c) The eligible telecommunications carrier shall maintain a current e-mail address with the Commission, which the Commission will use to inform the eligible telecommunications carrier of the Commission’s Lifeline secure website address and that new Lifeline service applications are available for retrieval for processing.

(d) The eligible telecommunications carrier shall maintain with the Commission the names, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of one primary and one secondary company representative who will manage the user accounts on the Commission’s Lifeline secure website.

(e) Within 20 calendar days of receiving the Commission’s e-mail notification that the Lifeline service application is available for retrieval, the eligible telecommunications carrier shall provide a facsimile response to the Commission via the Commission’s dedicated Lifeline service facsimile telephone line at (850)413-7142, or an electronic response via the Commission’s Lifeline secure website, identifying the customer name, address, telephone number, and date of the application for:

1. Misdirected Lifeline service applications;
2. Applications for customers currently receiving Lifeline service; and
3. Rejected applicants, which shall include the reason(s) why the applicants were rejected.

In lieu of a facsimile or electronic submission, the eligible telecommunications carrier may file the information with the Office of Commission Clerk.

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(f) Pursuant to Section 364.107(1), F.S., information filed by the eligible telecommunications carrier in accordance with paragraph (9)(e) of this rule is confidential and exempt from Section 119.07(1), F.S. However, the eligible telecommunications carrier may disclose such information consistent with the criteria in Section 364.107(3)(a), F.S. For purposes of this rule, the information filed by the eligible telecommunications carrier will be presumed necessary for disclosure to the Commission pursuant to the criteria in Section 364.107(3)(a)4., F.S.

(11) When an eligible telecommunications carrier provides a subscriber with notice of impending termination of Lifeline assistance pursuant to Section 364.10(1)(e), F.S., the notice shall contain the telephone number the subscriber may call to obtain more information about the subscriber’s Lifeline assistance from the eligible telecommunications carrier. Notices of impending termination of Lifeline assistance provided by local exchange companies shall also inform the subscriber of the availability of discounted residential basic local telecommunications service, as set forth in Section 364.105, F.S. An eligible telecommunications carrier shall not impose additional verification requirements on subscribers beyond those which are required by this rule.

(12) If a subscriber’s Lifeline assistance is terminated and the subscriber subsequently presents proof of Lifeline eligibility, the eligible telecommunications carrier shall reinstate the subscriber’s Lifeline assistance as soon as practicable, but no later than 60 days following receipt of proof of eligibility. Irrespective of the date on which the eligible telecommunications carrier reinstates the subscriber’s Lifeline assistance, the subscriber’s bill shall be credited for Lifeline assistance as of the date the eligible telecommunications carrier received the proof of continued Lifeline eligibility. If the Office of Public Counsel certifies a subscriber eligible to receive Lifeline service under the income test set forth in Section 364.10(3)(a), F.S., an eligible telecommunications carrier shall not impose any additional charges.
(13) Eligible telecommunications carriers must advertise the availability of Lifeline assistance using media of general distribution, as required by Title 47, U.S. Code, Part I, Section 214(e)(1) Provision of universal service, Eligible telecommunications carriers, subparagraph (B), 2011 edition of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which is incorporated into this rule by reference and which is available at: (hyperlink). An eligible telecommunications carrier must provide written notice to a customer within 30 days of receipt of the application providing the reason for a rejected Lifeline application, and providing contact information for the customer to get information regarding the application denial.

(14) Eligible telecommunications carriers shall publicize the availability of Lifeline assistance in a manner reasonably designed to reach those likely to qualify for the assistance, as required by Title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 54, Subpart E, Section 54.405 Carrier obligation to offer Lifeline, paragraph (b), as amended March 2, 2012, which is incorporated into this rule by reference and which is available at: (hyperlink). An eligible telecommunications carrier must provide 60 days written notice prior to the termination of Lifeline service. The notice of pending termination shall contain the telephone number at which the subscriber can obtain information about the subscriber’s Lifeline service from the eligible telecommunications carrier. The notice shall also inform the subscriber of the availability, pursuant to Section 364.105, F.S., of discounted residential basic local telecommunications service.

(15) If the eligible telecommunications carrier generates customer bills, the eligible telecommunications carrier must also place an insert in the subscriber’s bill or a message on the subscriber’s bill at least once each calendar year advising subscribers of the availability of Lifeline to those who qualify for the assistance. If a subscriber’s Lifeline service is terminated and the subscriber subsequently presents proof of Lifeline eligibility, the eligible telecommunications service.

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telecommunications carrier shall reinstate the subscriber’s Lifeline service as soon as
practicable, but no later than 60 days following receipt of proof of eligibility. Irrespective of
the date on which the eligible telecommunications carrier reinstates the subscriber’s Lifeline
service, the subscriber’s bill shall be credited for Lifeline service as of the date the eligible
telecommunications carrier received the proof of continued Lifeline eligibility.

(16) Each eligible telecommunications carrier shall maintain accurate records detailing how
the consumer demonstrated his or her eligibility for at least 3 years, and for as long as the
subscriber receives Lifeline assistance from that eligible telecommunications carrier. All
eligible telecommunications carriers shall provide current Lifeline service company
information to the Universal Service Administrative Company at www.lifelinesupport.org so
that the information can be posted on the Universal Service Administrative Company’s
consumer website.

(17) Eligible telecommunications carriers must advertise the availability of Lifeline service to
those who may be eligible for the service. At a minimum, if the eligible telecommunications
carrier publishes a directory, the eligible telecommunications carrier must include in the index
of the directory a notice of the availability of Lifeline service. If the eligible
telecommunications carrier generates customer bills, the eligible telecommunications carrier
must also place an insert in the subscriber’s bill or a message on the subscriber’s bill at least
once each calendar year advising subscribers of the availability of Lifeline service.

(18) Eligible telecommunications carriers may not charge a service deposit in order to initiate
Lifeline service if the subscriber voluntarily elects toll blocking or toll control. If the
subscriber elects not to place toll blocking or toll control on the line, an eligible
telecommunications carrier may charge a service deposit.

(19) Eligible telecommunications carriers may not charge Lifeline subscribers a monthly
number-portability charge.

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(20) Eligible telecommunications carriers offering Link-Up and Lifeline service must submit quarterly reports to the Commission no later than 30 days following the ending of each quarter as follows: First Quarter (January 1 through March 31); Second Quarter (April 1 through June 30); Third Quarter (July 1 through September 30); Fourth Quarter (October 1 through December 31). The quarterly reports shall include the following data:

(a) The number of Lifeline subscribers, excluding resold Lifeline subscribers, for each month during the quarter;
(b) The number of subscribers who received Link-Up for each month during the quarter;
(c) The number of new Lifeline subscribers added each month during the quarter;
(d) The number of transitional Lifeline subscribers who received discounted service for each month during the quarter; and
(e) The number of residential access lines with Lifeline service that were resold to other carriers each month during the quarter.

25-4.113 Refusal or Discontinuance of Service by Company.

(1) As applicable, the company may refuse or discontinue telephone service under the following conditions provided that, unless otherwise stated, the customer shall be given notice and allowed a reasonable time to comply with any rule or remedy any deficiency:

(a) For non-compliance with or violation of any state or municipal law, ordinance, or regulation pertaining to telephone service.

(b) For the use of telephone service for any other property or purpose than that described in the application.

(c) For failure or refusal to provide the company with a deposit to insure payment of bills in accordance with the company’s regulations.

(d) For neglect or refusal to provide reasonable access to the company for the purpose of inspection and maintenance of equipment owned by the company.

(e) For noncompliance with or violation of the Commission’s regulations or the company’s rules and regulations on file with the Commission, provided 5 working days’ written notice is given before termination.

(f) For nonpayment of bills for telephone service, including the telecommunications access system surcharge referred to in subsection 25-4.160(3), F.A.C., provided that suspension or termination of service shall not be made without 5 working days’ written notice to the customer, except in extreme cases. The written notice shall be separate and apart from the regular monthly bill for service. A company shall not, however, refuse or discontinue service for nonpayment of a dishonored check service charge imposed by the company, nor discontinue a customer’s Lifeline local service if the charges, taxes, and fees applicable to dial tone, local usage, dual tone multifrequency dialing, emergency services such as “911,” and relay service are paid. No company shall discontinue service to any customer for the initial nonpayment of the current bill on a day the company’s business office is closed or on a day.
preceding a day the business office is closed.

(g) For purposes of paragraphs (e) and (f), "working day" means any day on which the company’s business office is open and the U.S. Mail is delivered.

(h) Without notice in the event of customer use of equipment in such manner as to adversely affect the company’s equipment or the company’s service to others.

(i) Without notice in the event of hazardous conditions or tampering with the equipment furnished and owned by the company.

(j) Without notice in the event of unauthorized or fraudulent use of service. Whenever service is discontinued for fraudulent use of service, the company may, before restoring service, require the customer to make, at his own expense, all changes in facilities or equipment necessary to eliminate illegal use and to pay an amount reasonably estimated as the loss in revenues resulting from such fraudulent use.

(2) In case of refusal to establish service, or whenever service is discontinued, the company shall notify the applicant or customer in writing of the reason for such refusal or discontinuance.

(3) Service shall be initiated or restored when the cause for refusal or discontinuance has been satisfactorily adjusted.

(4) The following shall not constitute sufficient cause for refusal or discontinuance of service to an applicant or customer:

(a) Delinquency in payment for service by a previous occupant of the premises, unless the current applicant or customer occupied the premises at the time the delinquency occurred and the previous customer continues to occupy the premises and such previous customer shall benefit from such new service.

(b) Delinquency in payment for service by a present occupant who was delinquent at another address and subsequently joined the household of the customer in good standing.

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(c) Delinquency in payment for separate telephone service of another customer in the same residence.

(d) Failure to pay for business service at a different location and a different telephone number shall not constitute sufficient cause for refusal of residence service or vice versa.

(e) Failure to pay for a service rendered by the company which is not regulated by the Commission.

(f) Failure to pay the bill of another customer as guarantor thereof.

(g) Failure to pay a dishonored check service charge imposed by the company.

(5) When service has been discontinued for proper cause, the company may charge a reasonable fee to defray the cost of restoring service, provided such charge is set out in its approved tariff on file with the Commission.

Rulemaking Authority 350.127, 427.704(8) FS. Law Implemented 364.03, 364.19, 364.604, 427.704 FS. History–Revised 12-1-68, Amended 3-31-76, 10-25-84, 10-30-86, 1-1-91, 9-16-92, 1-7-93, 1-25-95, 7-5-00, Repealed _________.

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FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

AGENDA

STAFF WORKSHOP

IN RE: INITIATION OF RULEMAKING TO AMEND RULE 25-4.0665, F.A.C., LIFELINE SERVICE, AND TO REPEAL RULE 25-4.113, F.A.C., REFUSAL OR DISCONTINUANCE OF SERVICE BY COMPANY

January 21, 2015, at 1:30 p.m.
Room 105, Gunter Building (Internal Affairs Room)
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

1. Staff overview of draft rules
2. Comments and alternative suggestions from interested persons
3. Discussion of suggested changes and timeframes for next steps
4. Adjournment