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~~Consolidated Communications of Florida Company~~
~~26 Yarmouth Lane~~
Suite 100
~~Downingtown PA 19335~~

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COMMISSION CLERK

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BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: 2024 State certification under 47 C.F.R. §54.313 and §54.314, annual reporting requirements for high-cost recipients and certification of support for eligible telecommunications carriers.

DOCKET NO. 20230076-TP
ORDER NO. PSC-2023-0294-FOF-TP
ISSUED: September 27, 2023

The following Commissioners participated in the disposition of this matter:

ANDREW GILES FAY, Chairman
ART GRAHAM
GARY F. CLARK
MIKE LA ROSA
GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

ORDER AUTHORIZING 2024 UNIVERSAL SERVICE CERTIFICATION

BY THE COMMISSION:

One of the primary principles of universal service support as described in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Telecom Act) is for consumers in all regions to have reasonably comparable access to telecommunications and information services at reasonably comparable rates.¹ The federal universal service high-cost program is now designed to help ensure that consumers in rural, insular, and high-cost areas have access to modern communications networks capable of providing voice and broadband service, both fixed and mobile, at rates that are reasonably comparable to those in urban areas.² The program supports the goal of universal service by allowing eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) to recover some of the costs of service provision in high-cost areas from the federal Universal Service Fund. Carriers can be designated as ETCs in Florida by the Florida Public Service Commission (Commission) or the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

In order for carriers to receive federal universal service high-cost support, state commissions must annually certify to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) and to the FCC that each carrier complies with the requirements of Section 254(e) of the Telecom Act by using high-cost support “only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended.”³ Certification will be filed online by the Commission through USAC’s online portal. Immediately following online certification, the

¹ 47 U.S.C. §254(b)(3) (2023)

² FCC. “Universal Service for High Cost Areas - Connect America Fund,” updated July 7, 2023, <https://www.fcc.gov/general/universal-service-high-cost-areas-connect-america-fund>, accessed August 17, 2023.

³ 47 C.F.R. §54.314(a) (2023)