

## **BURT TOWNSHIP RESOLUTION**

### **Protesting the MPSC Determination to Increase Telephone Rates**

The Burt Township Board, on behalf of the residents and businesses in the township, feel that the recent Michigan Public Service Commission's (MPSC) decision on Hiawatha's "no choice" rate increase should be challenged for failing to fulfill their requisite goals and responsibilities to serve the customer (the Michigan rate payer resident/business owner).

It is apparent Hiawatha conducted a self-serving campaign to collect signatures illustrating an illusion that customers were begging for this new coverage and rate increase. During this same period, MPSC changed its position from supporting the Burt Township position; to one of swallowing the Hiawatha hyped campaign signatures hook, line and sinker.

**WHEREAS**, the MPSC granted phone companies the authority to force customers to pay a mandatory increase in rates for services not requested or desired;

**WHEREAS** , the MPSC allowed themselves to be led, directed and driven by the phone companies professionally lobbied arguments;

**WHEREAS**, the MPSC failed to fulfill their chartered goals of protecting the financial and service interests of the rate paying customers;

**WHEREAS**, the MPSC failed to monitor and ensure that adequate communications and hearing process protocols where used in the rate change process;

**WHEREAS**, the MPSC failed in their goal of "Provide customers with the opportunity to choose" phone services. Indeed, the exact opposite was approved by MPSC by forcing a mandatory service and huge rate increase;

**WHEREAS**, the MPSC failed in its purpose and goals of determining alternate service and payment arrangements for regulated services i.e. MPSC did not require the phone companies to make the UP wide service optional and voluntary;

**WHEREAS**, the MPSC is rendering decisions that are "protectionist" for the phone companies that is fully contrary to the best interests of the customers.

The communications marketplace is experiencing expanded customer offerings from a growing number of providers and different service packages. MPSC decision to force services on customers is worse than supporting a monopoly; it's akin to government coercion and control of the marketplace;

**WHEREAS**, even some customers that financially benefit from the new service and rate increase, think the service should be an option and not mandated by MPSC;

**WHEREAS**, the MPSC failed to pursue simple and direct communications with customers opposing the petitioner's request;

**WHEREAS**, the MPSC failed to adequately assess and pierce the veil of a trumped up utility driven campaign for showing customer support or opposition to the petitioner's request.

**THEREFORE**, the Burt Township Board on behalf of our residents and businesses would like to request a halt to the increase, due to the short notice prior to the increase, the lack of notification of the hearing, the fact that the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) did not rely on any objective customer preference data are all reasons for the request.

It appears to the Burt Township Board and residents and businesses of Burt Township in Alger County that since four telephone companies are doing this, that the MSPC is PROMOTING a monopoly with forced rates and forced services, instead of providing optional services.

Roll Call vote was taken: Gordon Kniss – aye  
Lois Leavenworth – aye  
James Seibert – aye  
Lori Savage – aye  
Lee Durrwachter – aye

Adopted: October 11, 2005 .

*Lori Savage*

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Lori Savage  
Township Clerk